

What Does God's Voice Sound Like? Part 6

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I. Introduction

Do you ever notice how when things don't go as you expected, you get tempted to say or do the wrong thing, make the wrong decision, a decision that will alter the rest of your life? How can we keep from falling into this pit? How can we overcome this strong desire to escape, to avoid what's coming, especially if it's something that may be the best thing for us?

II. When Satan Tempts Us to Stumble, How Do We Reach Out for God's Voice?

REVIEW:

God still speaks today, the Bible begins and ends with God speaking and He still speaks, (Genesis 1:3; Revelation 22:20; John 10:27).

The different ways God speaks, first, God never contradicts Himself (Galatians 1:8). Second, He speaks in many ways: *through an audible voice* (Genesis 12:1-4). *Through the Bible* (Hebrews 4:12). *Through Jesus* (John 14:10). *Through thoughts* (Romans 12:2). *Through others* (Acts 9:10-17). *Through events/circumstances* (Jonah 1). *Through visions* (Acts 18:9-10). *Through Angels* (Matthew 28:5-7). *Through dreams* (Genesis 20:3). *Through your conscience* (Romans 2:14-15). *Through creation* (Romans 1:19-20).

When does God speak? Always, to encourage, strengthen, correct, protect, and remind you who you are (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Ephesians 6:10-18; Colossians 3:1-17).

The Dangers of hearing God's voice, the dangers are: 1) thinking that it's His voice when it isn't and 2) thinking that He only speaks through the Bible. God told us to check to see if it's His voice: if it contradicts His Word or who and what Jesus is, then it's not God (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Galatians 1:8; 1 John 4:1-6). What about our deceiving heart? The Spirit can overcome our sinful heart (Galatians 4:6; 5:16-24).

What voices do we hear? Satan's (Genesis 3:1-7, 10-11; John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 2:2), the world's (which is guided by Satan, Colossians 2:8; 1 John 2:15-16; 5:19), our flesh's (Mark 7:21-23; Romans 8:5-8; Galatians 5:19-21), our conscience's (which was given to us by God, Romans 2:14-15), but we also hear Jesus' voice (John 10:27; 16:12-15).

Satan will use bad and good news to deceive you, he uses bad news all the time (Gideon in Judges 6). But he also uses good news: he used a godly thing, the Mosaic Law (Romans 7:12) to turn Saul/Paul into a murderous zealot (Acts 22:1-5). And he turns good news into bad news (Numbers 13-14). Whether you're a sinner or saint; he'll use both to destroy you.

How to discern if it's God's voice, first, does it align with who Jesus is and what He said (1 John 4:1-3, cf. 1 Corinthians 12:3)? When Satan quoted Scripture, Jesus knew it wasn't God because it didn't match His voice/Word (Matthew 4). Second, you have to know Him, what He's like and how He thinks, which means spending time with Him as Jesus did (John 5:19-20). If you get to know Jesus, you'll recognize His voice and follow it (John 10:27). Third, what Satan says takes no faith to believe; what Jesus says takes faith to believe (Judges 6:12, 14, 16). Finally, what Jesus says will always draw you closer to God and His purpose for your life; what Satan says always draws you away from both (Exodus 3-4).

Two key questions to ask, the first is, “**Is that Jesus’ voice or Satan’s?**” “Who wants me to think, say, or do that, Jesus or Satan?” Second, “**Is that true or a lie?**” If it’s a lie, it’s Satan, the father of lies (John 8:44, cf. 1 Kings 17—the Widow of Zarephath thought God sent Elijah to kill her son, but He sent him there to save her and her son).

To hear God, you have to spend time with Him, *The role of prayer*, prayer is a conversation with God, so don’t say something then walk away. And don’t put Him on your “To Do” list. He’s always there, so talk with Him then listen for His voice and keep listening. *The role of the Spirit*, the Father placed His Son’s Spirit in your heart (Galatians 4:6) so that you could hear Jesus’ voice (John 16:12-15). *The role of Daily Devotionals / Bible Reading*, the Bible is God’s voice; the more time you spend with it, the more you’ll recognize God’s voice. So read it regularly. If devotionals help, use them but use ones that use God’s Word. The goal is not to feel something, but to become something (2 Corinthians 3:18).

To hear God, you have to confess (the lies) and repent (ask God for the Truth), tell God how you really feel **and why**. You have to confess the lies you believe. If you’re furious with Him, if you wish you were dead, if you hate your life, if you don’t believe in Him, etc., etc., tell Him. But don’t forget to tell him why you’re angry, frustrated, etc. The reason why you believe something is the lie. Then ask Him to show you the truth that will set you free (John 8:32), which is repentance. Since He already knows, confession is not for God’s benefit but yours. It’s how you open the door to His truth which enables you to let go of the lies.

The one preventing you from hearing God’s voice and his three weapons (Genesis 3), Satan’s goal is to rob, kill and destroy you (John 10:10). *Isolation*, Satan will isolate you from God so that you won’t be able to see clearly, especially your horrible mistakes (Genesis 3:7-19; 1 John 1:5-10). *Deception*, once Satan, the father of lies (John 8:44), gets you alone, he will deceive you (Genesis 3:1-3). *Accusation*, Satan is the accuser (Revelation 12:10). So once he gets you to believe his lie(s) and do the thing (sin) that takes you further away from God, he accuses you, which brings more guilt and shame, which drives you deeper into isolation, deception, and accusation (Genesis 3:7-12). But the moment Satan attacks, God’s ready to rescue us. If we respond to His voice calling us out of Satan’s lies, He’ll free us from those lies and clothe us with His truth (Genesis 3:9-21).

Things that keep us from God, thus, from hearing His voice: *Are you facing God or away from Him?* Satan is brilliant at using your circumstances against you. Through them, he’ll get you to turn away from God (e.g., Elijah, 1 Kings 19). *Forgiveness*, sin separates us from God; forgiveness reunites us (Romans 5:1-11). If we fail to receive forgiveness or give forgiveness, we cut ourselves off from God’s voice (1 John 1:5-10; Matthew 6:15). And Satan loves using un-forgiveness against us (2 Corinthians 2:5-11). *Unbelief*, when we refuse to believe, we put a barrier between us and the Lord (John 5:31-47). It’s not just unbelievers who struggle with unbelief, believers struggle too, especially when circumstances blind us (Matthew 14:28-31). If you want to hear God, you have to believe in Him (Hebrews 11:6). God is always present (Psalm 139:7-12) but we can’t hear Him because our unbelief keeps us from seeing Him. *Satan*, his goal is to drown out God’s voice with the “facts” of our life as interpreted by him. If we fall for it, we’ll be so blinded that we’ll believe the worst about ourselves, our life, and God (Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17-19 cf. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4). *A false identity*, Satan’s goal is to give you a false identity but you come into this world with a true identity given to you by God from birth (Psalm 139:13-16; Galatians 1:13-16—what did Paul think he was born to do? What was he actually born to do?). **Stand** in what God says, not in what Satan says about you (Ephesians 6:10-18). *Fear*, behind every fear is a lie about us, our lives, and/or the Lord. But is there anything not under Jesus’ control? Nothing! (Hebrews 1:1-14; 2:8-9, 14-15) and we’re seated with Him at the right hand of the Father! (Ephesians 2:4-6). Those who set their eyes on Jesus aren’t conquered by their circumstances; they conquer (e.g., Joseph, Genesis 37-41).

How did Jesus respond to Satan's lies? How did Jesus respond to a guaranteed shortcut to fame and fortune? With God's truth about Himself, His life and God (Matthew 3:13-4:11). *First*, you have to know who you are: Jesus knew He was the Son of God because He heard it directly from His Father for 40 days (Matthew 3:17; 4:2). *Second*, you have to know who God is: He's not your angry Jude/Executioner, a God who abandons you, nor your servant to command however you wish. He's your Loving Father who will thoroughly prepare you for the battles ahead (Matthew 3:16-4:2). *Third*, you have to know your destiny, the life God gave you not the one your circumstances keep telling you is yours. You were born to live a specific life with meaning and purpose (Psalm 139:13-16). **How did Jesus respond to anxiety and depression?** It's not a sin to feel anxiety or depression or any other negative emotion; the sin is in how we respond to it. Jesus faced anxiety and depression and defeated both by listening to His Father's voice (as we can, Hebrews 4:16) concerning the bleakness and distress that seemed to overpower Him (Matthew 26:36-56).

How to kill Satan's lies with God's truth: Behind every sin is a lie about you, your life, and God. In order to uncover the lie, you have to find out the reason why you sinned: why are you anxious, fearful, angry, cheat on your wife, etc. The real reason may be buried underneath several layers, so it helps to have someone look at the issue with you. Put it in a sentence that states the reason why, e.g., "I started ignoring my wife because I've got to make my business succeed." Ignoring your wife is a sin, but we really don't have the real reason why this man ignores his wife. We need to find out why business success is more important to him than loving his wife. As we dig further, we discover that he's been chasing success for years but nothing's worked. He's now desperate to succeed. So we try again, "Success is crucial to me because if I don't succeed, then it means I'm a failure." There's the lie; it's a lie about himself: if he fails in business, he's a failure.

To help bring God's truth to your issue, feeling, need, etc., ask these four questions (they're from Caesar Kalinowski's book *Bigger Gospel: Learning to Speak, Live, and Enjoy The Good News in Every Area of Life*):

Who is God? List His attributes especially any that relate to your issue/sin: He's a loving Father who never sees us as losers but marvelous creatures made in His image designed for a specific purpose.

What's God done to prove who He is?

The Bible: how does the past prove who He is? Many biblical heroes in Scripture thought they were losers, but God, their loving Father, showed them who they really were.

Your life: how does your past prove who He is? What has Jesus done for you since He found you? List everything that He's done for you that relate to your issue/sin.

How does Jesus' life, death, and resurrection prove who He is? Jesus willingly took on your sin and gave His life for yours in order to give you a brand new identity (2 Corinthians 5:17).

In light of who God is, who are you now? In light of all the above, what's your identity now? List everything, especially things that relate to your issue/sin, e.g., in Christ, you're now a brand new person with all the guidance you'll ever need to succeed in life (Philippians 4:13). And Jesus will show you that real success has nothing to do with a career (Matthew 6:19-20).

In light of who God is and who you are, how should you respond? Since you don't need to prove anything to anyone about who you are because of your position in Christ (Romans 8:33), you no longer have to stress over every failed business decision/venture. The Lord who made you will show you what your purpose in life is including which career path to follow. But whether you succeed or not, you'll be content (Philippians 4:11-12).

A young man struggles with doubt about his marriage, he was an atheist most of his life but now he was a Christian. As he looked back at his life, he realized that God was always there reaching out to him through individuals like his grandfather who was a good Christian man, but who never forced it down his throat. His parents separated at a young age and it was his environment that taught him about life, about love, sex, and marriage. There was never a shortage of beautiful women where he worked and he dated many of them. Eventually, his father, a Christian man, became ill. By this time he was dating a different kind of girl, not like the string of beauties he'd dated before. It's not that she was unattractive. She was different especially in her demeanor and character. He saw this woman treat his dying father like a loving daughter would treat her own dying father and he began to fall deeply in love with her and it had little to do with her looks, which surprised him. Before, his attraction was solely based on looks, but not this time. He sensed that God was telling him to marry her, so he did. A few years went by and then he started having doubts, "Do I really love her?" "Should I have married her?" "I'm still attracted to all these beautiful women; will I be happy with *her* for the rest of my life?"

Is this God's voice or Satan's? Does it contradict God's Word on love, sex, and marriage? Would Jesus say this or Satan? Is it true or a lie? How many voices are speaking (God's, Satan's, his conscience, his flesh, the world)? How's Satan interpreting the good news (he's got a good woman, but Satan's saying, "She's overweight now; she won't do. You need a gorgeous woman")? Does it take faith to believe what Satan is telling him, will it draw him closer to God's purpose? What's the lie he must confess ("I'm no longer attracted to her because she's overweight.")? And what's the truth he needs to hear from God ("Your attraction was never based on looks; you fell in love with her because of her character.")? Satan's three weapons: isolation (it's Satan and him having a conversation about his wife's attractiveness), deception ("You don't like unattractive girls."), accusation ("If you divorce her, you'll go to hell."). What's keeping him from hearing God (he's facing away from God, forgiveness, Satan, a false identity, fear, and unbelief: he can't imagine he'll be satisfied with an overweight girl)?

The Four Questions:

Who is God? He's all-knowing, thus knows what love, sex, marriage, and attraction truly are.

What's God done to prove who He is?

The Bible: how does the past prove who He is? He's opened the eyes of many who were blind, e.g., when Paul initially saw Christians, he hated them. After the Lord opened his eyes, he loved them.

Your life: how does *your* past prove who He is? He gave me a great woman who not only loved me but your dying father.

How does Jesus' life, death, and resurrection prove who He is? Jesus died and rose again to free us from the enemy and resurrect our thinking about everything, including attraction (Matthew 5-7; Luke 4:18).

In light of who God is, who are you now? I'm a man who is no longer bound by his lusts; I have the power of Christ's Spirit to overcome my lusts (Galatians 4:6; 5:16).

In light of who God is and who you are, how should you respond? I will see the wonderful woman the Lord gave me and vow to love her as Christ love the church (Ephesians 5:25-30).

III. Conclusion

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.