


## Day 3 Hearing When God Speaks

 **Focus:** Experiencing God by thinking about Him during the day

 **Scripture:** Read 1 Samuel 3:1-10. Ask the Father to open your mind to understand what He has for you in today's study.

### INTIMACY IS A PROCESS

The beauty of the process is the joy we experience as we grow closer to the Lord. Unlike anything else in life, this quest for intimacy is divinely propelled. God loves for you to desire to grow close to Him, and He longs to delight your heart with His love! Consider Jesus' prayer to the Father as His crucifixion drew near. (See John 17:13 in the margin.)

**Choose the statement that best summarizes intimacy with God.**

- Intimacy is a goal that can never be reached.
- Growing intimate with God is a life-long process and one that is celebrated each step of the way.
- It's easy to get discouraged trying to be intimate with God.

In our relationship with Jesus, intimacy becomes a goal that is ever before us and is one that we can celebrate each step of the way.

**Spend a few moments with the prayer of Jesus in John 17:6-9. Imagine the Father's joy when you come to Him, desiring to spend time with Him. Thank Him for pursuing this love relationship with you.**

"I am coming to You ... that My joy may be made full *and complete and perfect* in them [that they may experience My delight fulfilled in them, that My enjoyment may be perfected in their own souls, that they may have My gladness within them, filling their hearts]." **John 17:13, AMP**

### RECOGNIZING GOD'S VOICE

Samuel thought it was the priest, Eli, speaking to him. He was quick to respond when he heard his name called but did not recognize the voice

of the Lord. Three times God called out to him. Each time Samuel rushed to the elder priest and answered, "Here I am." After that third time, Eli perceived that it was the Lord calling the boy.

**In what ways has God spoken to you? Underline all that apply.**

Scripture	through another person	in a song
prayer	nature	other _____

**There may be times God is speaking to you throughout your day. Which of the following might keep you from hearing Him? Check all that apply.**

- I'm thinking about all I have to do.
- My mind is preoccupied with negative thoughts of other people.
- Financial worries are keeping me stressed.
- My feelings are hurt about what someone said or did.
- I'm not happy about the way I look or feel.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

It's natural to be preoccupied with life. Great demands are placed upon you in all the roles you play. You may be much like Samuel—simply preoccupied with your duties and not recognizing God's voice.

God keeps calling your name. He is so persistent with His love! He wants to enter into your busy schedule and minister to you and soothe you with His peace and His joy. Through spending time with Him and thinking about Him throughout your day, you will begin to recognize His voice.

Recognizing God's voice means experiencing Him. Experiencing God means being aware of His presence, His love, His joy, and His peace.

Someone may say something to you in conversation, and you know it is a word from God. Sometimes you may become acutely aware of beauty in nature, and hear God speaking. You may recall a Scripture passage during the day which speaks to a certain need, issue, or circumstance. These are all examples of God speaking to you!

**Place a check by the statements that describe your experience.**

- I don't usually hear God speaking to me during a busy day.
- When I think about Him during the day, I'm more likely to experience Him.
- Spending time with God first thing in the morning, before my day begins, usually helps me focus on Him throughout the day.
- The times I'm most at peace are the times I'm aware of His presence.
- When I'm around others, I don't usually experience God's presence.
- When I'm stressed out, I don't hear God speaking to me.

## SPEAK, LORD. I'M LISTENING!

The fourth time the Lord spoke to Samuel, the boy responded, "Yes, LORD, Your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10, NIV). This passage speaks to me of the consistency of God. He's unchanging in His love for us. Just as he continued to call Samuel, He continues to speak to us and pursue us wherever we are and whatever we are doing.

I can imagine the joy and excitement of young Samuel when he realized the Lord was speaking. He finally recognized God's voice and responded.

Excitement and joy are always present when you "hook up" with God. You must make the choice to desire Him and to experience Him. Will the response of your heart be, "Speak to me, Father. I'm listening"?

**Rank the statements 1,2,3 with 1 being what must take place first for you to become more intimate with God.**

- \_\_\_ I accept that God desires an intimate love relationship with me.
- \_\_\_ As I spend more time with Him in Bible study, prayer, and thought, He will continue to fill me with His joy.
- \_\_\_ I choose to accept His invitation of drawing me closer to Him and begin to desire a deeper relationship.

**What is God revealing to you today?**

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**As you close today's study, start your prayer time with this prayer:**

*Dear Father, I long to be in Your presence. As I understand more about how to become intimate with You, I know I will experience more joy and peace. It's exciting to think about how You want to spend time with me. Draw me closer to You. I love You.*

# Day 5 Being Positive in Negative Circumstances

 **Focus:** Being positive in the face of negative situations

 **Scripture:** Ask the Father to reveal His purposes and ways to you as you prayerfully read Romans 4:18-25.

*No way!* Glenda thought as she read her devotional about being positive in the midst of trials. Through a simple story, the author challenged her at the very point of her vulnerability.

She had been engaged a year ago to a man she desperately loved and longed to spend her life with. Three weeks before the wedding, he walked away pledging his love to another.

**Check three feelings you imagine were at the top of Glenda's emotional heap.**

- anger     confusion     embarrassment     loss of self-esteem  
 betrayal     shock     rejection     glad to be rid of him

**Have you ever experienced these feelings or similar ones?**  yes  no

**Did you have a difficult time being positive?**  yes  no **Explain.**

## GOD UNDERSTANDS

As I was writing this study, I received a call from a friend who was experiencing difficulty with the concept of being positive when her world was falling apart. "It doesn't seem humanly possible," she said, "to be positive when so many bad things are happening to me. It doesn't seem realistic."

God understands our inability and even our resistance to being positive when everything inside us feels negative. He knows that in our weakness we are not able to overlook all of life's negatives and immediately jump into a positive lifestyle. He doesn't want us to ignore the facts of the negative situation, but He does want us to rely on His power to get us through one step at a time.

## ABRAHAM WAS HOPEFUL

Based on your understanding of Romans 4:18-25, answer true (T) or false (F) to the following statements.

- \_\_\_ Abraham believed God because everything He said made sense.
- \_\_\_ Abraham knew God would do what He said He would do even though he had reason not to believe.
- \_\_\_ Abraham faced the fact that his body was as good as dead.
- \_\_\_ Abraham's negative outlook got the best of him, and God did not receive glory.
- \_\_\_ God continued to bless Abraham for his hope and positive attitude.

## WE HAVE A REASON TO BE POSITIVE

As a Christian you have a reason to be positive! At times God may ask you to be positive and hopeful about a situation simply because He is God and He is in charge of your life.

The world says, "seeing is believing." The Bible says that we must trust in, adhere to, and rely on God (Romans 4:24, AMP). God wants you to believe Him first, without knowing the outcome of your situation!

**Pause and ask the Father to touch your heart about a particular situation where you need His power to be more positive. It may be one you've already thought of during this week's study. Submit your free will to Him, asking Him to help you take small, positive steps of obedience.**

Have you ever heard someone say, "I'm not being negative, I'm just being realistic"? Some people think being positive is not being realistic. That line of thinking is contrary to Scripture. Just like Abraham you can face each situation by choosing to place your faith and hope in God. As you practice this, you will develop a mind that is open to the will of God—whatever that may be.

Consider Glenda whose fiancé ran out on her. By adopting a negative attitude, Glenda might say, "My life is over. No one will ever want me again. I'm going to be miserable the rest of my life."

By being positive and realistic, Glenda could say, "I hate that this happened and I hurt so much. I know it's going to take time to get through this, but I trust God to restore me. He may send someone else my way if that's His will for me. God knows what's best for my life."

Day after day messages are being encoded in our minds. We carry on conversations with ourselves, interpret situations, and cast judgements. This self-talk can either be explosive and filled of doubt and criticism or positive and filled with hope. Here are some examples of self-talk.

“Why don’t I just give up?”

“God is in control. Things are going to work out.”

“I don’t understand, but I trust Him.”

“God must really be disappointed in me.”

“I’m never going to make it through this.”

“Father, I turn this over to You. I choose to believe You will take care of it.”

**Which of these examples do you most identify with right now?**

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**Is it positive or negative?**  positive  negative

## OUR PART IS TO BELIEVE

Sometimes, as hard as we try, we just can’t make things happen the way we want them to happen. I believe God sometimes wants us to mentally, emotionally, even physically back off from a situation, allowing Him to reveal His glory as He resolves the issue. Romans 4 tells us that Abraham was strengthened and credited with righteousness as he believed God.

**Do you need to back off a situation in your life right now, believing that God will resolve it and reveal His glory?**  yes  no **If yes, commit to giving this to God.**

**What is the Lord revealing to you right now?**

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**As you close today’s study, start your prayer time with this prayer:**

*Dear Father, You are speaking to me through Your love about the negatives in my life. Thank You for understanding my weakness, my hurt, my frustration. I place \_\_\_\_\_ in Your keeping right now. I believe You love me and You will take care of this situation. Reveal Your glory. I love You.*