

# Church of God Sunday School



## HOW CAN I HEAR GOD'S VOICE?

### DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** Samuel heard God's voice at a young age (1 Samuel 3:1-19).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** Jesus said His sheep recognize His voice (John 10:1-14).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** Ways that God speaks to us (Romans 10:13-17; Hebrews 1:1-2).
- ❑ **Thursday:** It is important to have "ears to hear" (Zechariah 7:11-12; Luke 8:5-8).
- ❑ **Friday:** God speaks in times of depression, fear, and sadness (1 Kings 19:18; Exodus 3:12; 2 Kings 20:5).
- ❑ **Saturday:** A story of listening to the wrong advice (1 Kings 13:1-30).

**MEMORY VERSE:** *"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."* —Isaiah 30:21

### God Desires to Talk to You

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have God talk to you? Perhaps you have heard His voice. What was it like? When God created the very first man and woman, He desired to have a relationship with them. Not only did God want Adam and Eve to talk to Him, but He wanted to talk to them as well. Communication is the key to good relationships, and it is the same concerning our relationship with God. Since we cannot see God with our physical eyes or hear Him with our physical ears, how do we know when He is talking to us and how do we know what He is saying? Once again, the Bible is our best source for answers.

In the Old Testament, Samuel was a child when God first spoke to him. Samuel thought it was Eli, the high priest, calling him. After three times, Eli realized God was trying to talk to Samuel, and he told Samuel to answer, "Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth." Because Samuel "did not yet know the LORD," Eli helped him to understand what he was hearing was the voice of God. God continued to talk to Samuel throughout his life. Samuel grew up to become a priest and a prophet who was mightily used of God. Samuel learned at a very young age how to recognize God's voice and the importance of obeying what God told him to do.

### Developing Good Spiritual Hearing

Have you ever heard someone speak to you and you knew without even looking who it was? How did you know? It was because you recognized the voice. Studies have shown that often babies know their mother's voice at birth. Why? Because they have been hearing her voice for weeks before they were born. Did you know that sheep recognize their shepherd's voice? Many strangers can call to the sheep, but they will not follow them. However, when the shepherd calls, the sheep will come because they know his voice. Jesus was referring to this when He said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27).

The first time God talks to you, you might be like Samuel, not understanding what you are hearing. Just as Samuel told Eli what he heard, you should talk to your parents or a spiritual leader (like your Sunday school teacher or pastor) and ask them to help you. They have been hearing God's voice for some time and can help you to recognize His voice. As you learn who God is, what He likes and dislikes, and what makes up His character, you will find it easier to hear Him when He speaks to you.

You must put forth effort to hear God's voice. Often, His voice is like a whisper. In



1 Kings 19:11-12 God was not found in a strong wind or in an earthquake or in a fire. It was in "a sound of gentle stillness" (Amplified Bible) that Elijah heard God's voice. To hear God's voice often requires us to be quiet. Psalm 46:10 tells us we need to "Be still, and know that I am God." Just as it can be difficult to hear someone talking to you in a noisy, crowded room, too many times a noisy, busy life makes hearing God's voice a difficult challenge. Have you ever "tuned into" a favorite radio station? The station was broadcasting continually, but it was not until you "tuned in" that you could hear what was being said. It is the same with God. He is trying to talk to you, but you must have "ears to hear" (Luke 8:8).

Sometimes difficult circumstances of life (such as the death of a friend or loved one or a serious accident) can cause you to be more conscious of your need for God's help. God's voice will be a comfort to you in these dark times. Perhaps it is because you need Him more that you become more aware of His love and His presence.

### What Does God's Voice Sound Like?

There are stories in the Bible of times when people could audibly hear God's voice. (Moses at the burning bush, Israel at Mount Sinai, and Jesus' baptism are a few examples.) While Jesus was here on earth, God said, "This is my beloved Son: hear him" (Luke 9:35). When Jesus returned to Heaven, He promised to send the "Comforter." That happened on the Day of Pentecost—God sent His Holy Spirit to live in the hearts of men and women who are saved. Today God speaks to us through His Word, His Spirit, and His ministry.

Some people describe God's voice as a strong thought or impression. Others have heard God speak to them by bringing a Scripture or hymn to their minds. Yet others realize that God is speaking through the words of a pastor or youth leader or Sunday school teacher. It is a learning process. It might seem difficult at first, but the longer you live for the Lord, the more opportunities you will have to hear God speaking to you. If you obey what God is telling you to do, He will continue speaking to you, and in time it will become easier to recognize His voice.



### What Does God Say?

Learning who God is will greatly help you to understand what God is trying to say to you. First, God will never tell you something that contradicts the Bible. "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33). When He speaks, it is truth! Second, God speaks in specific terms. He will not tell you that you MIGHT have done something wrong or that MAYBE you should do this or that. God will make His will clear and plain to you.

Have you ever had a thought that you need to read your Bible or that you have not prayed today? That is God's voice, gently reminding you to read His Word or talk to Him. Have you ever been about to say an unkind word about someone and had a thought come into your mind that says, "You shouldn't say that"? That was God's voice, trying to keep you from saying something you should not say.

Have you ever had a bad day and it made you feel depressed? These are the times when God will send encouragement your way through the thought of a Bible verse or a song. It is helpful to read what God said to men in the Bible during their times of fear, sadness, or depression. God spoke to Elijah when he was depressed (1 Kings 19:18), to Moses when he was fearful (Exodus 3:12), and to Hezekiah when he was sad (2 Kings 20:5).

### Spiritual Deafness

There are many things that can prevent you from hearing God's voice. Are you too busy? The devil will tempt you to fill your time with activities and things that are not always sinful yet are time consuming, leaving little or no room for personal time with God. Is there sin in your life? Have you failed to obey God's voice in the past and not made it right with God? Sin is a barrier between you and God. Are you listening to the wrong people? An Old Testament prophet paid a terrible price for taking advice that contradicted God's words (1 Kings 13:11-30). Do you have an "ear to hear" or are you spiritually deaf? Are you neglecting to read your Bible and pray? If you cannot hear God's voice, it is important that you search out the reason why and remove the hindrance.



1. What is the key to good relationships? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why did Samuel not recognize God's voice (1 Samuel 3:7)?  
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3. How can your parents or spiritual leaders help you recognize God's voice? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. List two or three examples (not in the lesson) of people in the Bible who heard God speaking to them: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What are some of the ways that God speaks to us today? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why is hearing God's voice a learning process? \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. How will learning about God's character help you in hearing His voice? \_\_\_\_\_  
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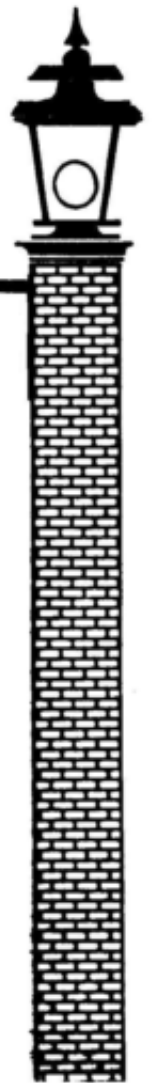
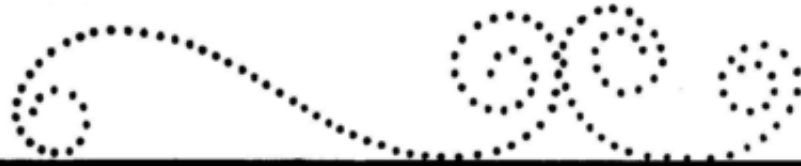
8. List four causes of spiritual deafness: \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

9. Read Jeremiah 22:21. What was the reason the people were not hearing God's voice? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. If you listen and obey God's Spirit, what does Romans 8:14 call you? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Has God ever talked to you? How did you know it was His voice? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Are You Really Listening?



The story is told of a famous man who decided to find out whether anybody was really listening to what he had to say. One evening while in a long receiving line, as each person came up to him and extended a hand, he smiled and said, "I murdered my grandmother this morning." People would say to him things like, "How lovely!" or "Just continue your great work!" No one was actually listening to him. Finally, a foreign diplomat shook his hand. When the famous man said, "I murdered my grandmother this morning," the diplomat responded quietly, "I'm SURE she had it coming."

Too many young people listen to God in the same way. They ask, "Is this the one I should marry?" or "Is this where I should go to college?" or "Is this the right job for me?" But they do not truly hear what God says. They hear only what they want to hear.

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## "Can You Hear Me Now?"

Today with the abundance of cell phones, a common catchphrase is often heard: "Can you hear me now?" This is said when there is a bad connection between the two phones. To avoid a dropped call, it might be necessary to move to an area where the signal is stronger. Could it be that many people have a "bad connection" between them and God because they are in a weak place, spiritually speaking? Could moving to a better spiritual position increase the signal strength, making it easier to hear what God is saying?

