

SAMPLE PREVIEW

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Introduction

What do we mean when we say listening prayer? Are we asking you to listen for a loud and deep audible voice coming from the clouds? Or is it possible that most of you who are on this trip have already practiced listening prayer in your own walk with Jesus?

We serve an amazing God who wants to relate to us and speak to us. He speaks in a variety of ways. In these 10 short devotionals, we will learn more about the God we serve, and the heart He has for a personal relationship with each one of us.

Have you ever felt like God has directed your path through circumstance? Has the advice of a friend ever led you to follow God's will? Have you ever felt that "tug" on your heart where you felt called to be a part of something or to go somewhere? These can all be examples of God speaking to us! In fact, every time you read the Bible, relate to it, and act in obedience, you are listening to God.

God certainly desires to speak to you, but we all must be very careful in discerning His voice. We do not want to make the mistake of relying on our own thoughts, a friend's advice, or bad indigestion and automatically consider it to be God's voice! To discern for His voice, there are questions to "test" and see if it really is from God. Throughout this devotional, use these questions to test what you hear from God...

- Does it exalt Christ? (John 16:14)
- Is it scriptural? (Proverbs 30:5-6)
- Do other Christians confirm it? (Proverbs 15:22)
- Does it produce good fruit? (John 15:1-16)
- Does God bring it to pass? (Isaiah 55:10-11)

Each devotional from this day forward will include four parts:

- Teaching
- Scripture
- Prayer
- Listening

It is the desire of Adventures in Missions that through this devotional, you will draw closer to the God who loves you and desires a love relationship with you! Will you take the challenge of listening to Him this week?

God's desire to relate to us

A theme in scripture

All throughout scripture we see a picture of God in pursuit of a people. He's romancing us. He wants one thing: people who will love Him with their whole heart. This is why we see Him in the Old Testament as a jealous God.

God woos His people. The Israelites structured their lives around Him. They followed His laws, they set aside time to worship Him. The New Testament example is only more extreme. Ministry and discipleship weren't two tasks on the disciples' "to do" list, they were as natural to them as eating and drinking. This is the kind of undiluted devotion God desires from us.

Trace the theme of the undivided heart through scripture and you see what God is after. He wants a whole-hearted relationship with us.

- Ex. 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before me."
- Mt. 22:37 Jesus restates: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart..."
- In Deuteronomy we are encouraged at least 10 times to love him with all our hearts.
- Psalms is the story of God wooing our hearts. Ps. 119:58 "I have sought you with all my heart."
- Ps. 51:17 "A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."
- Ps. 86:11 "Give me an undivided heart."
- Pr. 23:26 "My son, give me your heart."
- Jer. 29:13 "You will find me when you seek me with all your heart."
- Ezekiel 11:19 "I will give them an undivided heart."
- Joel 2:12 "Return to me with all your hearts."
- Mt. 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart."
- 2 Tim. 2:22 "Call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

How does God communicate? *part 1*

A variety of ways

Scripture shows that God uses a variety of methods to communicate with His people. The following is a list of some of the methods recorded. First think about this: just because He's used these ways in the past doesn't mean He will always use them with us. This boxes God in as much as saying that He has chosen to limit Himself. However, these examples do show us the patterns of a God who: (a) wants to communicate with people, and (b) will not be limited in how He does it.

Go through the following list and read the scriptures. Though it would take longer, you may want to do more than just read them here; find them in the Word. To properly interpret scripture, we need to look at the context. Ask God to speak to you through what you read. Note the patterns – God uses a variety of means to communicate.

Through Scripture

Acts 2:16-21 "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel..."

Peter links the activity of the Holy Spirit with Old Testament prophecy.

Acts 4:25-26 "You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father, David." *Peter and John echo Psalm 2 in their prayer.*

Through Others

Deut. 18:17-19 "I will put my words in his mouth." *God declares that He will speak through a prophet.*

Num. 15:2 "Speak to the Israelites." *God commands Moses to communicate His desires to His people.*

Is. 28:11 "Through men of strange tongues...I will speak to this people." *A prophecy to the Israelites.*

Circumstances/Events

- Gen. 50:20 "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." *Joseph tells his brothers how God redeemed his bad circumstances.*
- Acts 1:26 [The disciples] cast lots. *After days of praying, with no obvious direction they ask God to use the luck of the draw to decide who will replace Judas.*

Inwardly/Impressions

- 1 Sam. 23:2 "He inquired of the Lord...The Lord answered."
David hears of the Philistines attack and looting and asks God what his response should be.
- Acts 15:36 A desire to make a return visit. *Paul suggests to Barnabas that they go visit their church plants.*
- 1 Cor. 12:7-9 Wisdom, knowledge and faith are gifts of the Spirit. *These often originate as impressions from the Lord; Holy Spirit-generated thoughts.*

Scripture Meditation

Spend a minute or more just thinking about the following passage: "David inquired of the Lord...The Lord answered."

1 Chronicles 14:14-16

Prayer-"Heavenly Father, where did David get this habit of asking you questions? Why is it that you want us to ask you questions? What do you want to show me about this scripture?"
