

Can You Hear Me?

Tuning in to the God who speaks

Group Participants Guide

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Listening to God
Week 1
Introductory Session

Purpose of this course:

- 1- For our own lives to be changed as we learn to listen to the God who speaks.
- 2- To work together to develop this material into classes for future use.

Why are you here?

Do you believe it's possible to hear God, and if so, to what extent? If not, are you willing to allow Him to shift your thinking?

John 10:2-5; 14-15; 27

Does God have a voice?

How does He use it?

Who hears His voice? (Is this a broader group than you thought? Not just priests, not just 'spiritual people'...) Who doesn't hear His voice?

What is required of those who hear Him?

Habakkuk 2:1-2

- 1- Be Still
- 2- Look
- 3- Listen
- 4- Journal

Group Practice:

One of the ways, and the most infallible way, God speaks to us is through the written word, the Bible. Do you have a "life verse"?

Listen to a scripture:

Get a paper and pen ready.

Be still. ("Dial down".)

We command our flesh to be still, our eyes to be open, and our ears to waken to God's voice. We choose to engage our faith to hear God's voice.

Ask, "Jesus, is there a scripture that you want to tell me right now? (He might remind you of a scripture that you know, or He might quote chapter and verse, and send you looking it up. Why do you want me to know that?"

Step into a Bible Story:

Be Still. (“Dial down.”)

We command our flesh to be still, our eyes to be open, and our ears to waken to God’s voice. We choose to engage our faith to hear God’s voice.

Begin to picture a favorite Bible story: (Daniel and the Lion’s Den- Daniel 6:16ff; The Good Shepherd-John 10:1-18; Jesus Walking On the Water-Matthew 14:22-33; Mary Anointing Jesus’ Feet with Oil- John 12:1-11; Jesus and the 10 Lepers-Luke 17:12-19; Lost Sheep or Lost Coin-Luke 15:3-7, 8-10.)

- See the story in your heart.
- Step into the story.
- Where is Jesus (God)? What is He doing? Saying?
- Where are you? Are you one of the characters? What are you doing?
- Come close and talk to Jesus.
- Live the story with Him.
- Ask Him what the main point of the story is.
- Ask Him to show you a time when you saw this “main point” happening in your life. Where was Jesus at that event? What was He doing?

Assignment:

Along with your regular devotional time in the Bible, read Chapter One in [Can You Hear Me?](#) By Brad Jersak and write in your journal the “Tuning In” exercises.

If you find guides helpful, download the Study Guide from www.bradjersak.com; click on “store”.

Begin to journal your quiet times with the Lord, if you don’t already. Especially write down any questions you ask Him, or thoughts you share with Him and His responses to you.

If you’re not currently spending regular devotional time reading God’s Word and praying, this would be a good time to begin. Try starting with about 15 minutes. Be still: worship God; thank him for who he is. Set your focus on him. Read in the Bible, asking him to call your attention where he wants to speak something special to you. (Pray Psalm 119:18- “Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law.”) Find a translation that is easy to understand. If you don’t know where to start, ask Jesus where He wants you to start. To get to know Him better, start in one of the Gospels. Write in your journal what he tells you.

Listening Prayer Supplement

This is a very simple method of learning to pray by first hearing the things that are on the heart of God, rather than out of our own thoughts and wishes. When we know that we are praying those things that are on His heart, our faith is emboldened, because we know that we are praying according to His will.

Hab. 2:1-3 I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint. Then the LORD replied: “**Write down the revelation** and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

1. **Be Still:** *Take a minute to close your eyes, tell Jesus that you love Him. Allow the concerns of the day to settle out. (Picturing those thoughts like autumn leaves falling can be helpful).*
2. **Look:** *Put your focus on the Lord and ask Him to open the eyes of your heart, and open your ears to hear Him. You can even declare: “My flesh, be still; I open my eyes to behold the Lord; I open my ears to hear His voice.”*
3. **Listen:** *Listen for His voice. You can ask Him questions, such as, “Lord how do you see this situation / this person?” “Jesus, what do you say about this?” Be sure to wait for His response. It may come immediately; it may come in the course of the day. You can have confidence to pray in this way because Jesus has promised, “My sheep hear my voice” (John 10:27).*
4. **Write it down:** *When God speaks something to our hearts, it’s important not to forget. Write down what He impresses on your heart, and look in faith for God to fulfill what He has spoken.*
5. **Pray:** *Out of what you hear God speaking in these quiet moments, begin to pray. You are learning to pray out of the heart of God, rather than out of your own wisdom!*

“Can You Hear Me?”

Week 2

PART ONE - The Simplicity of Listening Prayer, Chapter 1- My Sheep Hear My Voice
Supplemental: Sample from *Rivers from Eden* by Eden Jersak.

Hebrews 1:1-2

How do you speak to me? Let me count the ways!

When was the first time you remember God speaking to you?

Discuss the chapter.

John 10:2-5; 14-15; 27-28

What does this tell us about Jesus? –about the sheep?

Are there conditions God sets for hearing His voice?

Even Them? (p. 24)

Is hearing God’s voice just reserved for really important occasions in our lives? How normal/ mundane or abnormal/REALLY SPECIAL, do you think He wants our communication with Him to be?

Do Not Despise... (p. 35)

Assignment:

Read Eden’s Journal Sample. *Everyone’s journal will be very unique. Ideas: drawings and collages, word studies, conversations with God. Make it according to your own personality. The important thing is that you record the communion between you and God.*

Read the first part of Chapter 2, pp. 37-49, write in your journal the “Tuning In” exercises, and any other insights God gives you.

If you find guides helpful, download the Study Guide from www.bradjersak.com; click on “store”.

Begin to journal your quiet times with the Lord, if you don’t already. Especially write down any questions you ask Him, or thoughts you share with Him and His responses to you.

SUPPLEMENT: HOW GOD SPEAKS

1. Primarily, God's voice IS heard through **Scripture**.

- a. 2 Tim. 3:16
- b. Joshua 1:8
- c. Psalm 119:105
- d. Heb. 4:12
- e. James 1:22

Our accuracy in hearing him with our hearts often depends how well we've filled our hearts with the Light of Scripture. His word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path. Sometimes we wonder why its so hard to hear him; so difficult to see the path; straining to hear the voice that says left or right, stop or go. Maybe if we'd just turn the flashlight back on, it would be supremely obvious.

Isaiah 8:20 – “To the law and to the testimony. If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.”

But did you know that you can study and even memorize the Scriptures all your life and still never hear the voice of God?

John 5:37-40 - they had diligently searched the Scriptures hoping to find life in them ... but because they gave no ear to the Living Word,... they never ONCE heard the voice of the Father.

2. Some Christians teach that God only speaks through Scripture. Yet the Bible teaches that God's voice may be heard via at least three broad avenues. Try to recall examples from Scripture and your own life where God spoke in each of these ways:

a. messengers: authors, preachers, prophets, musicians, testimonies, angels, teachers, evangelists encouragers, books, children, and even the occasional donkey or shrubbery.

b. circumstances of life:

(i) coincidences: *the winks of God which when followed, draw a treasure map into the blessings of God.*

- divine appointments (Peter – Cornelius “just then”)
- the well-timed door-knock, phone-call, radio-song

(ii) parable-events: if this were a dream, what would it mean?

(iii) symbolic language: snow = mountains = ocean =

3. God speaks directly to your heart (Rom. 8:14-16, John 16):

a. We hear: thoughts, words, sentences, names

- Samuel's audible voice
- Elijah's still small voice
- Father's voice from heaven
- Isaiah's inner voice saying "this is the way ..."
- Solomon prays, "Give me a hearing heart"
- Behold, I stand at the door at knock, if anyone ...
- Psalm 29:3-9
- John 10:4-10 - Do you recognize your friends' phone voice? God's "phone voice" is often the familiar inner voice you hear just before you rationalize it away. Practice listening until you can recognize it and can distinguish it easily. Can you?

b. We see: visions, dreams, pictures, mental images

St. Bonaventure / Hugh of St. Victor: believed that we have 3 sets of eyes: the eyes of your body, the eyes of your mind (imagination), and the eyes of your heart (our spiritual eyes).

- we sing "Open the eyes of my heart" and "Turn your eyes upon Jesus"
- Eph. 1 "I pray that the eyes of your heart would be enlightened",
- Heb. 2:2 "Fix your eyes on Jesus."
- 2 Cor. 3:18 "... we, with unveiled faces all behold the Lord's glory."
- *Cloud of Unknowing*: Contemplation = fixing our loving attention on beholding Him. "The only infallible way of dealing with sin to ensure its destruction root and crop is to contemplate God. In His presence, it shrivels and dies."
- Behold or beheld - nearly 1400 times. Lo – 200.
- Lo and Behold = look and see
- The authors paint vivid pictures for us – they describe visions with colors and textures and sound and they say, this is what I beheld ... now YOU behold it too. And as we open the eyes of our heart to behold the temple of God in Revelation 4, we see the throne, the emerald, rainbow, the angels, the cherubim, the elders, the crystal sea, the flashes of lightning and the roll of thunder and as we gaze into the center, we hear a voice say, "BEHOLD, the Lion" and we fix our eyes there and BEHOLD, we see a lamb.
- Jesus who said, LO (LOOK), I'm with you always."

c. We sense: intuitive, impressions, vibes, just know that you know, gut feeling. In the cloud of unknowing, the author calls this "an awareness of God, known and loved at the core of your being".

Andrew Murray: constant conscious awareness / sensing of God's presence.

- Deut. 30 – very very near, in your heart and in your mouth.
 - I don't hear him, but what comes to mind is ...
 - I don't hear him, but if he were speaking, I sense he'd be saying ...
- Larry Randolph: We are not stenographers taking dictation but children learning to interpret our Father's heart.

sample chapter: rivers from eden

day 4



who am i to you?

We'll want to ask much more about God's identity during this forty-day journey. But for now, pause to listen concerning your own identity before him. We get many conflicting and condemning messages about ourselves from the world, the flesh, and the devil. Our mind often hears "old tapes" and speaks negative self-talk.

But to walk in spiritual and emotional health, we need to defer to Jesus. To paraphrase his question to the Apostle Peter, "who does he say that you are?" He wants to speak a living word to your heart that will undermine your tendency toward self-loathing or false humility. True humility is simply agreeing with God about who you are. So let's ask him, "Lord, how would you finish the following sentence concerning me: 'You are my _____.'?"

Now consider this: What if God's answer is true? How does that influence your self-worth? Your self-talk? Does knowing this change how you live or think at all? Find out by taking time today to be what and who Jesus says you are.

who am i to you?

I feel about as comfortable asking Jesus who I am to him as I have ever felt on a first date—butterflies and all! I want to figure this out for myself, but after yesterday, I realize it's not about figuring things out on my own, it's about asking God and then letting him answer. So where will we meet to discuss this?

Jesus and I are meeting at a coffee shop today. I walk in the door and see he's saving a couple of seats right by the fire. The chairs are cozy, and I ease into the one across from him. We exchange smiles.

"Have you been waiting long?" I ask.

Just a few minutes. I like getting here early and anticipating your arrival.

I think I actually feel myself blush at his sweet comment. With that, two hot drinks arrive, my favorite and his.

"You ordered for me?"

It's your favorite isn't it?

"Yes."

Remember, I'm attentive, I noticed you like chai lattes.

We laugh easily together and then fall into a comfortable silence. I wonder how to pose the question, afraid it'll just sound silly. Someone walks by, recognizes Jesus, and comes over to say "Hi." Jesus talks with her and then turns toward me and says,

Let me introduce my friend Eden to you...

The word "friend" and all the strings attached to it race to the front of my thoughts. But before I start trying to figure things out, I decide to wait until she leaves and then let Jesus answer my questions.

“You called me your friend, why?”

Because you are. Don't you think we are? I don't meet for a chai latté with someone who isn't my friend. Those meetings are usually held somewhere cold and impersonal. But you and I, we connect, you've opened your heart to me, and that's all I require of a friend.

Our eyes meet over our steaming drinks, and I realize that I believe him. I am his friend, and he is mine!

“When did that happen? I mean, when did we become friends?”

When you stopped trying to be good and started being real.

“That wasn't easy. I'm still not sure how real I am at times. It seems way easier to measure goodness than 'realness'.”

That's probably true, because the world and the church have put up so many measuring sticks to determine 'goodness.' But being real is highly underrated. Being real looks messy sometimes, but that's the risk you take in being my friend. Is it worth it?

“Being real is the most amazing thing I have ever experienced. I always thought it would be like being naked in front of everyone, completely exposed. I was trying to cover myself with the 'garments of goodness,' but those garments never really warmed or protected me. Being real, being known, is the most liberating action I have ever taken.”

I've robed you in the garment of friendship, Eden. Is it warm?

“Very!”

Do you feel protected?

“Like never before!”

I slide back into the comfort of my chair, put my feet up, and smile across the table at Jesus, my friend.

“Can You Hear Me?”
Week 3

Can You Hear Me? Chapter 2 - Awakened Hearts: How We See and Hear God
Kairos Moments

Website for Meanings of names: www.babynames.com/V5/

Discuss the Chapter:

1. God’s voice can be heard from outside ourselves.

A. Primarily, God’s voice is heard through the scriptures.

John 5:37-40

Is it possible to know – even memorize- the Bible, yet never hear the voice of God?

Psalms 119:18, 105, 162; 1 Samuel 3:10

Pray: Ask Jesus if there is anything about your approach to his word that he wants to change. If so, in what way? Ask him what he is pleased with in the way you approach him in your Bible reading.

How have you experienced God’s voice through:

B. Messengers: p. 40-41)

C. Circumstances: (p. 44- 49)

• **Coincidences:**

Can you remember a “kairos” moment or opportunity in your life? How did God get your attention that this was a divine appointment? What was the fruit?

• **Symbols:**

How is a “symbol” defined? (p. 44)

Why can symbols be especially powerful communication tools?

Tuning In (p. 45): What is your first reaction to these symbols?

What are some ways God has used symbols to speak to you, personally?

What does your name mean? This could be a clue to God’s destiny for you.

Isaiah 62:2-4

Pray: Lord, here I am, ______. (*Write in your name and its meaning.*)
What do you say about my name? Do you have a new name for me?

• **Parables:**

What is a parable?

How has God used parables and their symbols in your life?

What spiritual truth did this teach?

Pray: Lord, please open my eyes this week to recognize the symbols and parables you place around me. Give me dreams to “instruct me in the night”.

Assignment:

Continue to look for parables and symbols, and write them in your journal.

Write down any dreams, and ask God what they mean.

Read and do Tuning In exercises, pp. 49-64

Additional resources:

Excellent article on dream interpretation: www.cwgministries.org

Go to “Free books and articles”; article on “idolatry vs. imagery” and “dream interpretation”

Kairos Moments

In the Greek, two words are translated into English as “time”: Chronos and Kairos. Chronos is where we get chronological – having to do with minutes, hours, days, and years, - the passing of time.

Kairos, however, has to do with a fixed, definite time, when things are brought to crisis. Sometimes this is translated as “the fullness of time”. Kairos is not measured by minutes, but by what is happening. Examples of “kairos” in scripture are:

Mark 1:15 “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Rom. 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Rom. 13:11 And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

A Kairos Moment is an opportune moment in the Spirit, a “divine appointment”, where He is moving in a special way, ready to move or act. In order for us to cooperate with this action, it is important for us to be in tune with the Spirit of God by listening for His voice. As we discern the uniqueness of the moment, we wait on Him to speak to us. Then we respond by speaking or obeying what we have heard. This obedience on our part, accompanied by faith, creates the reality of “Thy Kingdom Come” in this world.

Thus, the Spirit-empowered flow of a Kairos looks like this:

- The Spirit moves in a Kairos Moment.
- God’s child discerns the moment.
- God’s child stops, listens for God’s voice.
- God’s child obeys by speaking or acting on what has been heard.
- This action, accompanied by faith...
- Creates Kingdom reality in this world.

“Can You Hear Me?”

Week 4

Can You Hear Me? - Chapter 2 - Awakened Hearts: How We See and Hear God, pp. 49-64
Supplemental sheet: “Open the Eyes of My Heart”

Review:

How important is it for us to meet certain conditions in order to hear God’s voice?

In what various ways can all people hear God “speak”?

We can hear God’s voice from *outside* ourselves. How have you experienced God’s voice:

- A. Through His word, the Bible
- B. Through His Messengers
- C. Through Life Circumstances
e.g. Coincidences (“God-incidences”, or “kairos moments”, symbols, parables)

Chapter Discussion:

We also hear God’s voice from within our hearts, through hearing, seeing and sensing Him.

1. Hearing: an inner voice in the form of thoughts, words and sentences

What does His voice sound like? Read the following and briefly discuss what you observe about His voice and your ability to hear.

Psalm 29:3-9

1 Kings 19:11-13

Isaiah 50:4-5

1 Kings 3:9

John 10:4-10

How do we learn the difference between hearing God’s words v s. “our own thoughts”?

2. Seeing

John 1:18

Ephesians 1:17-19

Acts 2:25

1 Corinthians 13:12

What does it mean to “see” God? How is this possible?

Hebrews 12:2

2 Corinthians 4:6

2 Corinthians 3:18 (We behold His glory; “internal gaze wherein we behold a vision of the true Lord Jesus” p. 57)

“Meditation” = prayerful *and visual* reading of God’s word, not mere pondering.

Pg. 55: “*Modernism* has diluted spiritual insight into an abstract concept rather than a spiritual reality. *Cessationism* has taught us that visions and dreams were for special people in another era. *Alarmists* have so over-reacted in fear that they have labeled virtually all spiritual imagery as ‘New Age’. In all three cases the fruit is the same: a condition of spiritual ‘eyes tight shut.’”

Do you need eye salve?

Revelations 3:18b – Ask God for healing and restoration of sight.

Now take time to meditate on the Lord Jesus. (Tuning In: p. 61) “See” Him with the eyes of your heart.

As you picture him, how does he appear to you?

What form does he take?

What expression is on his face?

What does that expression communicate to you?

3. Sensing:

“I just know that I know.” Discernment; intuition; impressions; burdens; vibes; gut feelings. Have you experienced *sensing*? How? When?

GROUP PRACTICE:

As we open the eyes of our hearts, we move from a Picture □ Window □ Stepping in John 9:1-34 - See the story in your heart. Step into it. Where are you? Are you one of the characters? What are you doing? Come close and talk to Jesus. What is He saying? Ask Him what the main point of the story is. Why is that the main thing? Share what you saw and heard with the group.

Discuss:

Hearing God for Others (p. 63-4)

1 Cor. 14:3 – God’s word is an instrument for friendship and blessing. What are three indicators that a word is from God?

“If your motive is love, your purpose is encouragement, and your content is scriptural, then you cannot miss.”

One more group practice:

Go back to the Bible story. Remember what Jesus said was “the main thing”. Was that a word for you? Is that a word that he wants you to share with someone else to encourage and strengthen them?

Assignment:

Read and do the Tuning In exercises in Chapter 3, pp. 65-90

“Open The Eyes of My Heart”

Ephesians 1:18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints

Hebrews 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Revelation 3:18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

Blocks to seeing:

People of the Western World generally do not value the visionary capacity within them. We have tended to disdain the visual and idolize the rational. When we do begin to “see”, we quickly dismiss this as an abstract thought, rather than recognizing it for the gift of spiritual insight. Or many in evangelical churches have been taught to reject anything that involves the use of vision or imagination, because this may open us up to evil spirits. Cessationism has taught that these experiences were limited to biblical times. To heal this, we must:

1. Repent of any fear or unbelief that has come into your heart as the result of teaching.
2. Repent for not fully honoring and using a gift and ability that God has placed within you.
3. Repent for idolizing logic and self-thought.
4. Commit to honor and use vision as much as you have honored logic.
5. Ask God to apply eye salve: to breathe upon and restore your visual capacity.
6. Begin to practice by looking for what God wants to show you - learn to think in pictures.

Suggestions for Seeing:

1. Affirm your love for Jesus. Pour out your praises upon Him.
2. Be still in your body, your mind and in your heart. Take time to worship him. Sing a song, and begin to picture the words or scene that flow from the images in the song. Be quiet and wait. Relax.
3. Pray in your prayer language, if you have one.
4. Enter a biblical story using picture-images. Allow yourself to see the story unfold before you. Ask God questions about the scene: where He is, where you are, what he wants you to see.
5. Focus intently on Jesus: his expression, his form, his words, his emotions.
6. In intercession for others, see the person for whom you’re praying, and see Christ meeting that person. Watch what He does, then pray that into existence. Ask Him what this person needs. Connect with His heart for this person.
7. Ask God to speak to you during the night (Psa.m 127:2), and listen to your dreams. Write them down when you awaken. Ask Him what they mean.

Listening To God Week 5

Can You Hear Me? - Chapter 3A – “God Is That Really You?”, pp. 65-76
Supplemental Resource: “Becoming Still” (Mark Virkler)

Review:

Hearing:

Seeing: “No one has ever seen God” [John 1:18] vs. “I saw the Lord always before me” [Acts 2:25]

Sensing:

Blocks to hearing and seeing God:

CHAPTER DISCUSSION:

What is the danger of asking questions, such as “Am I just making this up?” (p. 65)

Testing God’s Voice:

What are the four voices Brad refers to? (Discuss their definitions and natures.)

Romans 12:1-2

Gal. 5:16-17

Matt. 4:1-11

What is the last, separate category?

So many voices...how can we possibly distinguish God’s?

Solutions:

1. Ignoring the voices.
2. Figuring it out by our own reasoning.
3. The biblical solution: Prov. 3:5-8

*“The good news is we need not always know the precise source of the other voices. The genuine voice of the Good Shepherd rises distinctively above all of them to speak words **of life and hope** that can be verified and embraced with great confidence.” (p. 70)*

His promises:

Matthew 28:20

Joshua 1:5

John 10:14,27

Jeremiah 33:3

Matt. 7:8-11

Posture of a Listener:

- A. Focused Attention -Psalm 46:10, Heb. 12:1-2
- B. Love-longing –Psalm 42:1-3, 7-8
- C. Humble Waiting –Heb. 4:9-11
- D. Letting it Be –Phil. 4:6-7; Ps. 46:10
- E. Receptivity –John 15:4-5; James 1:5-8

Suggestions for Becoming Still:

- 1. Remove distractions
- 2. Quiet your inner being
 - “Take a moment and see what your ‘antenna’ is picking up. It’s bound to be quite a cacophony.”
 - a. Write down things that need to be taken care of later.
- 3. Focus on Jesus.
- 4. Sense the “cry of your heart” (that which your heart is seeking to express), and repeat it over and over.
- 5. A spontaneous song in the morning – sing it over and over to the Lord.
- 6. Release physical tension (consciously relax tense parts; breathe deeply and slowly).

“Be still and know that I am God.” – “Stillness is not a goal in itself. I want to become still in mind and body so my heart can know and sense God moving within. His promptings are gentle, and until my own inner and outer ragings are quieted, I will not sense His inner moving.

In becoming still, I am not trying to do anything. I simply want to be in touch with the Divine Lover. I am centered on this moment of time and experiencing Him in it. Becoming still cannot be hurried or forced. Rather, it must be allowed to happen. At a point in your stillness, God takes over and you sense His active flow within you. His spontaneous images begin flowing with a life of their own. His voice begins speaking, giving you wisdom and strength. You find that you are “in the Spirit” (Rev. 1:10). Becoming still is an art to be learned, especially for those of the Western culture who are always on the go. However, our communion with the Lord must begin here. When you come to pray, take the first few minutes to become centered, and proceed only after you have become still. Out of your stillness, you will sense God.” (Mark Virkler, Communion with God, p. 48)

GROUP PRAYER:

Confession:

Is there a point at which you chose to shut your spiritual eyes?

Enter into a time of silent prayer, waiting on God. Ask Him to reveal to you any false beliefs that have allowed unbelief and fear to shut your spiritual eyes. Ask Him to show you what these blocks are. Confess these areas to one another and repent of them in prayer.

in “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus”

“Open the Eyes of My Heart”

“I Love You, Lord”

“Can You Hear Me?”
Week 6

Can You Hear Me? - Chapter 3 – “God Is That Really You?”, pp. 76-90

REVIEW:

Is this making a difference in your quiet times? In what way?

What kinds of questions are you asking God?

What do you find most effective to “dial down”?

How has He been answering?

Are there any problems/challenges that you’re having a difficult time overcoming in listening to God? (Discuss; maybe the group can give some helpful suggestions, and spend time in prayer about this.)

DISCUSS: p. 76-90

Discerning: We can test what we hear in three areas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

THE SOURCE:

1 John 4:1-4; 1 Corinthians 12:1 – How are we told we can recognize Jesus’ voice?

What are some questions you can ask when you want to know the source of what you hear?

John 14:16-21; John 16:13-16 – What are God’s assurances to you in these verses?

Tuning In Exercise, pg.76 – If you’re comfortable, share what God told you.

Did it sound to you like its source is God? Why?

THE CONTENT:

Donna Jordan, “Listening to God”:

“God speaks:

...truth (and renews our thinking that we are loved),

...with clarity (not in a complicated way),

...gently,

...instilling hope,

...establishing intimacy.”

The Stool Illustration:
(Draw it here)

A. THE BIBLE:

Why is it not enough to ask, “Is it *in* the Bible?”

Is everything commanded to God’s people in the Bible also commanded to us?

B. THE BODY OF CHRIST:

Matthew 18:20 assures us of Christ’s presence when two or three are gathered in His name.

Therefore, a reliable word from God should stand up to this test:

“Does it find confirmation in your community of faith?”

What is a “community of faith”?

What is the danger of isolating ourselves from the Body of Christ?

C. THE HOLY SPIRIT:

Why isn’t it enough to have a word’s source test true, and have it confirmed through God’s Word and the Body of Christ?

“Does the Holy Spirit testify to your own heart that this is truth?”

Biblical basis: Jeremiah 31:33-34; 1 John 2:26-27

How have you experienced this “inner witness” of the Spirit?

Have you experienced the reason/emotion conflict?

How does the Holy Spirit’s witness resolve this conflict?

D. ABIDE

Definition of “abiding”:

What is the importance of abiding?

Tuning In, pg. 86 - Let’s go back to our message from God (pg. 76):

Did the Word confirm it?

Does the Body confirm it? (Ask the group, “Does this sound like something God would say”?)

Does the Spirit confirm it? (How did your heart respond when you read the message aloud?)

TEST THE FRUIT

“As you lean into this word in faith, does it bear the fruit of the Spirit in your life?”

1st Question: “What is the immediate impact this word makes on me? I.e., How does it make me feel?”

What are some fruit-indicators of a word from God?

(1 Corinthians 14:3; Romans 14:17; Phil. 4:7; 1 Peter 1:8)

What does God’s voice sound like? (His tone)

(Romans 2:4; Titus 3:4; Titus 2:4; Hosea 2:14)

What are some indicators of bad fruit?

Hebrews 12; 1 Corinthians 14:24-25; Matthew 16:23 – God doesn’t always speak gently, How can we tell when rebuke and correction is from Him?

2nd Question: “What is the long-term influence of this word in my life? I.e., how is it effecting my character?”

“A true word from the Lord is an invitation to transformation.”

James 1:23-25 What is the promise of putting feet to the words our ears hear?

“Can You Hear Me?”
Optional Summary of Chapters 1-3 (Week 7)

Our purpose tonight will be to review Chapters 1-3 by allowing God to build our faith and confidence that His sheep (that’s us) really do hear His voice and behold His face.

Isa. 50:4-5 The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, *wakens my ear* to listen like one being taught. The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back.

Ephesians 1:18-20 I pray also that the *eyes of your heart may be enlightened* in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you....

2 Cor. 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord

Rev. 3:18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and *salve to put on your eyes, so you can see*. (The Holy Spirit is represented as balm, our Healer.)

John 10:1-27 TRULY, TRULY (!) ...the sheep follow him because they know his voice... My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

John 16:12-13 I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth.

God is a God who loves to talk with us.

God is a God who loves us to seek His face and behold Him.

“DIAL DOWN” to a frequency where you can hear.

Command – “Flesh, be quiet. Eyes, be open. Ears, wake up!”

CONFESS: Ask, “Lord Jesus, is there anything that keeps me from coming boldly to your throne of grace? (Heb. 4:16) Is there something in my eyes for which I need eye salve?” (Doubt, fear, boxes of theology, sin – all damage our eyes) Confess and repent, and ask Him to give you eye salve of the Holy Spirit, to bring cleansing, healing.

SCRIPTURE:

Do you have a life verse? ASK: Jesus, is there a scripture that you want to tell me right now?

Why do you want me to know that?

ENVISION JESUS:

(God gives us pictures in the Bible to help us. Psalm 23; Revelation 4; the Cross)

What does He look like? What form does He take? What is He doing? What are His eyes like? What expression is on His face? What does that communicate to you? What is He saying?

FRIENDSHIP QUESTIONS TO ASK HIM:

Jesus, what excites you...what makes you happy?

What do you like about me? (*Remember, true humility is agreeing with God.*)

What grieves you? (*This is what it means to be intimate with someone; when you can share honestly with no guilt trips. Hear how God wants to confide in you.*)

Why does that grieve you? (*God loves "Why" questions. We've learned not to ask because of unbelief. Jesus honors childlike faith, and children love to ask "why"!*)
Lord, let your heart be comforted. (*Behind his grief is His heart to bless. He wants to release His blessing, so removing hindrances will free the flow.*)

"His banner over me is love" (Song of Solomon 2:4)

Lord, if there is a banner over me, what does it look like? Is there a word on it? Is it a color?

HEARING, DISCERNING AND SPEAKING:

How do we know something is really a word from God?

1 Corinthians 14:3 - But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their *strengthening, encouragement and comfort.*

If you can hear for yourself, you can hear for others.

God wants us to converse naturally with Him throughout the day. We can ask Him, "God is there a banner over that person? Why? Do you want me to share it?"

LISTENING TO GOD FOR SOMEONE ELSE:

- 1) What's a Bible verse I can give away?
- 2) What's a banner over _____?
- 3) How do you see _____?
- 4) Is there a gift _____ needs from you today? (*God's "table of delights" - Open your eyes to see it before you. What gift does my partner need that you would set on that table? Have faith that He intends to give this, and He intends to give it through you.*)

“Can You Hear Me?”

Week 8

Can You Hear Me? - Chapter 4-“Was That Just My Imagination?”

Review:

What are some of the avenues through which God speaks to us?

How do you best receive God’s voice? (Hearing, Seeing, Sensing)

How do we know if the voice we are hearing is God’s voice?

Chapter Discussion:

What’s wrong with this question: “Was that God, or just my imagination?”

How can it be compared to the Parable of the Sower?

Along the path:

Rocky places:

Thorns:

Good soil:

Asking, “Is that God or my imagination?” is like asking, “Is that water or is that blue?” The answer is, “Yes.”

What is the better question?

Discuss: 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; Psalm 37:4; Hebrews 11:1

“Imagination is not a voice. It is a stage where God is willing and hoping to be invited.” –Brad Jersak

The Imagination:

Explain the inter-relationship of Choice, The Imagination, The Spirit and The Flesh.

What are some destructive abuses of the gift of imagination?

What are some ways that God wants us to use the gift of our imaginations?

Creativity:

Recreation:

Meditation:

Intercession:

Seeing Through Inner Windows:

What is the difference between “picturing Jesus” and “beholding Jesus”?

Have you heard, seen, or sensed God's voice through the use of your *active imagination* or through your *passive imagination*? What did He show/tell you?

What are destructive abuses of seeing through inner windows?

Read John 10:1-9. ("I am the Door.")

Have you ever walked through a "spiritual doorway" through Jesus?

Assignment:

- If you could step through a spiritual doorway this week, where would you like to go? Ask Jesus to take you there, and when you're there, ask Him what He wants you to do.
- Ask Jesus to reveal the spiritual reality around you this week. Ask Him how you can influence it for His purposes.

So... "Was that just my imagination?" The bottom line is _____.

Sing:

Open the Eyes of My Heart
Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus
Holy and Anointed One

Intercede for one another, by first asking Jesus questions, picturing this person as He does, etc. Then pray out of those things He has first revealed. You can start either by asking who would like to receive prayer, or by asking Jesus who He wants you to pray for.

Question Examples:

Lord Jesus, where do you picture _____?

Why do you see her/him there?

What do you want to do with her/him?

What are you saying to her/him?

I present this picture and burden to you, Lord. I'm asking for your help. Please show me a picture of how you are helping _____.

I bless what you're doing in _____'s life and stand in agreement with You. I'm asking for more; for the full fulfillment of Your work in _____'s life.

“Can You Hear Me?”

Week 9

Can You Hear Me? - Chapter 5- “The Meeting Place”

Supplemental Worksheets: “Why Is the Use of Imagination, Images, Dreams and Visions Important?” – Mark Virkler; Centering Prayer article by Shaun McCarty

Additional resources:

Bookmarks – tool for using Biblical stories as Meeting Places

Excellent article on dream interpretation: www.cwgministries.org

Go to “Free books and articles”; article on “idolatry vs. imagery” and “dream interpretation”

CD with songs for “Gazing Prayer”: Isn’t He with Brian Doerksen, in the Acoustic Worship Series by Vineyard.

Review:

Chapter Discussion:

What is the definition of a “Meeting Place”? (p. 121)

Hebrews 12:2 – “Fix your eyes on Jesus.”

Ephesians 1:18 – “I pray that the eyes of your heart would be enlightened.”

Revelation 3:18 - “Get eye salve.”

2 Corinthians 3:18 – “With open face we behold the glory of the Lord and are changed from glory to glory by the Spirit.”

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, open my spiritual eyes and heal them from blindness. Holy Spirit, guide me into the holy imagery of what David calls “the Hiding Place”, where prayer is a literal meeting place with Jesus. Good Shepherd, show and tell this sheep what I need to see and hear. Grant me discernment and recognition of truth from error in that place. Deliver me from evil and the fear of evil as I “*look up, and lift up my head; for my Redeemer draws near*” (Luke 21:28).

A PLACE:

“He walks with me and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own...” (C. Austin Miles, 1912; “In the Garden”)

Examples of Meeting Places in the Bible:

Images -

Locations –

Events –

Tuning In exercise, p. 129 – Was there a Bible story that you stepped into?
What did Jesus show you?

Personal Meeting Places:

We can meet God *anywhere*.

Memories – “Lo I am with you always... I will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Deut. 31:6)
What is the important question for us to ask the Lord in memories?

Why is it important to meet Jesus in a painful memory?

Have you ever experienced Jesus coming into a memory and bringing His perspective?

Visions and Dreams –

Materialistic worldview:

vs.

Biblical worldview:

Did the Lord meet you or instruct you through a vivid dream recently? Keep inviting His presence in this way.

Your Heart -

What is “the temple of the Holy Spirit”?

Our hearts: God’s throne, a gazing place, a worshiping place, a Meeting Place with the Lord.
Good question to ask God in light of 1 Cor. 3:16: “Show me my heart. What does it look like to you?” (Tuning In, p. 138)

A MEETING:

Revelation 3:18 – 4:11:

There is no veil. We are invited to draw near with confidence(Hebrews 4:16). We are seated with God in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6; Col 3:1-3) Jesus is welcoming you to either side: your heart (Rev. 3:20) or His Throne room (Rev. 4:1). They’re really the same.

Nurturing Prayer - Behold and Be Held:

Ask God: “What would my resting place look like?” – Hand Him the paintbrush. “Here, Lord, you create the perfect resting place. What does it look like? Sound like? Feel like?” Sense the texture and depth of this place.

Now, in that place, ask Him, “Lord, how much do you love me?”

WHY IS THE USE OF IMAGINATION, IMAGES, DREAMS AND VISIONS IMPORTANT?

by Mark Virkler

1. God has commanded us to imagine His Word (imeditate) (Josh. 1:8 , I Chron. 29:18).
2. Divine creativity comes through image (Exod. 25:9-22; 35:35).
3. When God reasons, He uses imagery (Isa. 1:18).
4. When Jesus taught, He used imagery (Matt. 13:34).
5. As Jesus lived, He ministered out of vision (Jn. 5:19, 20).
6. God has declared that one of the primary ways He communicates with us is through dream and vision (Num. 12:6; Acts 2:17).
7. God counsels us through our dreams at night (Ps. 16:7).
8. Sight is better than blindness (Jesus healed the blind (Mk. 10:46-52).
9. The Lord's Supper uses imagery ("This is My blood, this is My body." Jn. 6:53, 54; I Cor. 11:23-25).
10. Personal transformation occurs as we look into the spiritual realm (II Cor. 3:18; 4:18).
11. Pictures are powerful and produce heart faith (Gen. 15:1,5,6).
12. The Bible is full of pictures, dreams, visions, metaphors, similes, parables, and images.
13. Our prayers are to be full of imagery (Ps. 23).
14. Our worship is to be full of imagery (Ps. 36:5,6).

Centering Prayer

Edited from Article by Shaun McCarty

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<http://www.spiritualitytoday.org/spir2day/873935mccarty.html>

By entering into the contemplative dimension of prayer, a Christian approaches the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit by stillness and receptivity.

This ancient practice has its foundation in the omnipresence of God as expressed in St. Paul's words to the Athenians, "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Although long present in the Christian tradition, the practice is perhaps nowhere so clearly described as in the writings of St. Francis de Sales. He elaborates four ways of placing oneself in God's presence as a preparation for prayer:

The first consists of a lively, attentive realization of God's absolute presence, that is, that God is in all things and in all places. The second ... is to remember that he is present in a most particular manner in your heart and in the center of your spirit. A third... is to consider how our Savior in his humanity gazes down from heaven on all... who as his children, and most especially those who are at prayer, whose actions and conduct he observes... A fourth... consists in the use of simple imagination when we represent to ourselves the Savior in his sacred humanity as if he were near us just as... a friend

The intentionality of truly Christian prayer is inextricably bound up with baptismal identity, that is, with the relationship the baptized person has with God consequent upon incorporation into Christ. This has implications for all prayer. Such Christian intentionality is epitomized in the closing doxology of the Roman canons prayed at the Eucharistic Liturgy:

Through Him
With Him,
In Him,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
All glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father,
Forever and ever. Amen.

In acclaiming and celebrating the glory of God, the doxology speaks not just of the reality of a 'Three Person'd God' to whom the Christian prays, but also of the way he or she is prompted to pray within the Christian economy -- to God, through Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

Centering Prayer would seem a most appropriate expression of such Trinitarian intentionality. It is elegant silent testimony to the claim of St. Paul, "I am alive; yet it is not longer I, but Christ living in me" (Gal (2:20). It also is a way of taking seriously St. Paul's comforting assurance, "The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness, for, when we do not know how to pray properly, then the Spirit personally

makes our petitions for us in groans that cannot be put into words; and he who can see into all hearts knows what the Spirit means because the prayers that the Spirit makes for God's holy people are always in accordance with the mind of God" (Rom 8:26-27).

As with all authentic prayer, the expected outcome is growth in love -- love of God and love of others. It should make a difference! The author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* repeatedly says that love is the essence of the whole effort: "Indeed, the very heart of this work is nothing else but a naked intent toward God for His own sake" (Chapter 24). This 'ecstatic' intentionality is the opposite of self-absorbing introspection. Along with growth in love, one might also expect an outpouring of charity's companion gift, wisdom. William Johnston says: "the blind stirring of love eventually develops into a bright flame, guiding ...every choice." Moreover it is precisely this love that gives wisdom. Progress in charity, then, means progress in wisdom.

In addition to greater charity and deeper wisdom, one might also expect a maturing of the fruits of the Holy Spirit to become evident in one's life -- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22-23). This maturing, in turn, leads to deeper and wider compassion. Basil Pennington speculates as to how this happens:

"What happens -- the way the Holy spirit seems to bring this about -- is that in this prayer we experience not only our oneness with God in Christ, but also our oneness with all the rest of the Body of Christ, and indeed with the whole of creation, in God's creative love and sharing in being. Thus we begin, connaturally as it were, to experience the presence of God in all things, the presence of Christ in each person we meet. Moreover, we sense a oneness with them. From this flows a true compassion -- a 'feeling with.'"

To the extent that Centering Prayer is offered through, with, and in Christ, his attitudes and beatitudes become more one's own. One might expect a greater attitude of surrender to the will of God and more evident living of those values of the kingdom incarnated in Jesus and taught to his followers as the pattern of Christian discipleship that we call beatitudes.

Although it is prayer in its own right and not just a means to disposing for prayer, Centering Prayer can also provide a remarkable readiness for experiencing the presence of God in other forms of prayer including biblical reflection, liturgical celebration, communal prayer, and the practice of ministry. One might expect a 'ripple' effect even outside times for prayer. The quiet, peace, and willingness that make up Centering Prayer begin to 'ripple' through the rest of life and its daily activities.

As for the actual time of prayer, what 'happens' is implied in the adjective 'centering.' It is a term potters use for that act that precedes all others on the potter's wheel. It is the act of bringing the clay into a spinning, unwobbling pivot. This frees the clay to take innumerable shapes as potter and clay press against each other. The potter touches the clay at only one point, yet as the pot turns in the potter's hands, the whole vessel is affected. There is an experience of wholeness.

So, in reference to Centering Prayer, the object is not to 'wobble'! Just to be still. Let the Potter do the work.

It is my conviction that, over time, 'willing' fidelity to (rather than 'willful' effort at) the discipline of spending unambiguous time at the Potter's wheel is itself a form of body language declaring where we want our hearts to be. In these later novice efforts at the practice of the presence of God, even as I

‘wobble; Jeremiah’s visit to the potter comforts me:

The word that was addressed to Jeremiah by Yahweh, ‘Get up and make your way down to the potter’s house; there I shall let you hear what I have to say.’ So I went down to the potter’s house; and there he was, working at the wheel. And whenever the vessel he was working on came out wrong, as happens with the clay handled by potters, he would start afresh and work it into another vessel, as potters do. Then this word of Yahweh was addressed to me, ‘House of Israel, cannot I do to you what this potter does? -- it is Yahweh who speaks. Yes, as the clay in the potter’s hands, so you are in mine (Jer 18:1-6).

“Can You Hear Me?”
Week 10

Can You Hear Me - Chapter 6 – Meeting God to Intercede

Recommended supplemental reading:

Listening to God, a manual by Donna Jordan. \$7; available through YWAM Associates: laurie@ywamassociates.com.

For more in-depth study, Prayers that Heal the Heart: Prayer Counseling that Breaks Every Yoke, by Mark and Patti Virkler

Group Practice: (What does ACTS Listening Prayer look like?)

Adoration:

Confession:

Thanksgiving:

Supplication:

Review:

What is a simple definition of prophesying to someone? (p. 64)

What are some principles for sharing a word from the Lord with others? (p. 64; 87)

Chapter Discussion:

What is *Burden Bearing*? How does this type of intercession differ from empathy?

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. (Ephesians 4:2)

Anechomai = To sustain bear or hold up against a thing. Much like staking a tomato plant to sustain the weight. The strength of the stake is transferred to the plant and thus bears it up.

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:1-2)

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me. (Rom. 15:1-3)

Baztazo = Bear, carry, lift, take up, with the idea being to carry it *away* or *remove* it

Dutch Sheets, Intercessory Prayer, pg. 63: *“This connotation of bearing something to get rid of it becomes increasingly significant as we discuss our role in this facet of Christ’s ministry of intercession. It is imperative to know that we don’t simply carry someone’s burden. We **stake** (anechomai) ourselves to the person and **carry the burden away** (bastazo), helping them **get rid of it!**”*

Brad Jersak, p. 148: *“...not only are we to bear other’s burdens, and then bear them to the Lord I pray; but we are also to **release them to Christ, the ultimate burden-bearer**, who takes them upon himself.”*

“All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.” (Isaiah 53:6,12)

“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” (Psalms 103:12)

Describe the “cycle of burden bearing” (p. 149):

How is a “Meeting Place” helpful in bearing others’ burdens to the Lord?

How is discernment turned “off” when we empathize directly with the one for whom we’re burdened?

What are the steps we should take when we sense an intercessory burden coming on us?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

“For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.” (2 Corinthians 1:5)

Why is this way of burden-bearing beneficial? (Discuss)

“I find that the words of hope I receive at that point can be shared safely with faith and authority. They don’t come off as platitudes. Rather than sounding like Job’s amateur therapists I have a message that rings true.” (p. 152)

“Can You Hear Me?”

Week 11

Can You Hear Me - Chapter 7 – Overcoming Blocks to Meeting God

If God is never blocked, why does He allow blocks to exist? (p. 159)

When we encounter a block, don't panic – Jesus Himself is allowing you to see it for the purpose of healing our hearts and restoring intimacy.

BASIC TRUTHS WHEN FACING BLOCKS:

1. Jesus is never ever blocked with someone who wants to be free. What we call blocks are not blocks to Him, only to the one receiving prayer. If this is true, if we're working with Jesus, the prayer minister is not “blocked” either – rather, when we see a block, we have successfully followed Jesus to an important healing issue.
2. Jesus is never frustrated when He sees a block, nor need we be...in fact, it was Jesus that led us directly to the block. When you “run into a block”, it is always because Jesus wants to bring healing precisely to that place before He goes further.
3. The goal of the prayer minister is not to “get past” blocks to the real issue. This just causes frustration or, if we do manage to bypass a block, we've short-circuited the healing process. Rather, our goal is to follow Jesus in the discovery and removal of issues, fears, vows, hurts, lies, demons, etc. that are currently blocking their lives.

-Brad Jersak, Listening to Jesus for Personal Growth Seminar

Read Matthew 13: 3-9

Blocks are what steal the seed of the word from the soil of our hearts.

Describe the “Basic Template” for removing blocks.

What specific questions can we ask God to help discover these blocks?

- *Ask God to show you what the block is*
- *Ask God to show you where the block came from*
- *Ask God how it can be removed.*

(If God doesn't reveal anything, don't make something up. Just thank Him and enjoy His presence.)

Discuss the removal of the most common blocks:

Mental: The rational mind can poison the soil with unbelief.

Can you think of examples from Jesus' life of times when He spoke things that didn't make sense to His hearers?

Remedies: When you open your heart to God and ask Him to speak, ask these questions:

- What was your first impression?
- What comes to mind?
- If Jesus were speaking, what would He be saying/ doing?

Fear: A bad teaching or experience can poison the soil with fear.
What are the types of fear blocks?

How can they be removed?

- Ask Jesus where it first came in.
- Ask Him what the lie is.
- Ask Him to reveal the truth.

Shame: Feeling unworthy – a lie which poisons the soil with shame.
What does shame cause us to do?
How is it similar to fear?

How can it be removed?

- Ask Jesus where it first came in.
- Ask Him what the lie is.
- Ask Jesus to reveal the truth about it.

Sin and Pain: Burdens that we carry, which poison the soil with pain.

5 Types of Pain Blocks:

- Hurt
- Anger
- Grief
- Guilt
- Empathy

How can it be removed?

- Ask Jesus where it first came in.
- Our pain will cease to block out God's voice _____.
- Sometimes Jesus will _____ for you first.

Confusion/Demonic spirits: poison the soil with confusion or darkness
 What causes these blocks?

How can they be removed?

- Be still before God.
- Let go of worries.
- Take hold of peace.
- Bind away blocking spirits to Jesus, for Him to deal with.

Demonic, False Christs – Deception (Unclean spirits that masquerade as Jesus): Poison the soil with lies and misrepresentations of the true Jesus.
 What is their agenda?

Removal:

- Check for a religious spirit – belief in a Jesus who is distant, silent, passive
- Renounce the religious Jesus. Ask the true Jesus to unmask and remove it.

Fleshly, False Christs – Projection (False projection of Jesus from our own judgments):
 Poisons the soil with a false or distorted image of Jesus.

- Misconceptions about Jesus projected by our wounded soul

Removal::

- Ask for the true Lord Jesus to be revealed
- Check for judgments of others that you've projected on Jesus

Requires renouncing of judgments, repentance and forgiveness

Other possible hindrances to hearing God's voice

From Donna Jordan's manual, Listening to God:

- Lack of love for God and others.
- Underdeveloped spirit.
- Deafness from unforgiveness.
- Calloused conscience.
- Neglect, apathy and laziness.
- Pride.
- Idols.
- Immorality

- Occult.
- Disobedience.
- Fear of Man.
- Busyness. In the Chinese and Japanese languages, the symbol for “busy” means “Heart Dead”!
- Thought lives and attitudes.
- Not honoring your wife. (1 Peter 3:7)
- Unconfessed sin.
- Authority figures.
- Not honoring your parents.
- Life experiences.
- Not knowing your identity in Christ.
- Not knowing His character and not believing nor speaking truth.
- Condemnation.

Repentance:

- Admitting guilt and taking responsibility before God
- Confessing sins, not only with our mouths but also our hearts
- Receiving forgiveness
- Making restitution

It is a change of mind, heart and life toward the sin.
Repentance establishes relationship with God and restores love.

If God reveals a hindrance to hearing His voice, write it on a piece of paper. Repent and make restitution if you need to. Forgive anyone who has spoken against you. Put those words on the paper too. Ask Him if there’s anything in your living place that doesn’t glorify Him. Take this paper and these things and burn them. (Acts 19:18-20; Isa. 66:1-2)

The Silence of God:

What is the purpose of God’s silence?

How does His silence differ from the blocks we’ve been discussing?

Have you ever experienced His silence? If so, what was the resulting fruit?

Assignment:

Read and journal Chapter 8, “Listening Prayer in Decision Times”

“Can You Hear Me?”
Week 12

Can You Hear Me? - Chapter 8: Listening Prayer in Decision Times

Describe the two schools of thought that many people have concerning divine guidance.

“God can’t steer a parked car.”

“Sit tight until God does something.”

Have you ever practiced one or both of these two schools? How did it work?

What is the model for decision making that Brad suggests?

FRIENDS OF GOD...

The primary function of listening prayer:

“If you take responsibility for your relationship with God, he’ll take responsibility for your direction.” –Graham Cooke

Discuss fear of making mistakes and of failure, in light of friendship with God.

...WHO LIVE BY FAITH...

Living by faith starts with _____ and continues by _____.

Read John 14:16-20; 25-27 and Ephesians 5:15-19. What is the key to living by faith?

...AND CONSULT THE LORD...

2 Samuel 5:17-25

Where is the enemy? What is David doing? Where is God? Are you in this story? What is God saying? Ask him, “Is there a main point to this story?”

“Consulting God includes _____.”

Describe a good conversation with God in the morning before getting out of bed:

Luke 19 – The parable of the talents: “I trusted you with a city; now I’ll trust you with ten.” How does this apply to a mature relationship of decision making with God?

...ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT...

What is the role of signs in being led by God? When are they right? When are they wrong?

...INTO GOD'S PURPOSES.

What is the role of our free wills and God's sovereign voice, in discovering His purposes?

"If you live by his Spirit today (meaning acting in faith as His Spirit moves), his plan for you will roll out before you like a red carpet, one kick at a time."

When we pray for something that is our agenda, but not God's best, that thing becomes an _____.

Read Ezekiel 14:1-5. How does God answer these kinds of requests?

How do we learn to discern the difference between God's closing of a door or Satanic or natural opposition?

Have you ever experienced a godly boldness rise up in the midst of Satanic or natural obstacles? (Revelation 3:8; Zechariah 4:6-7)

Have you ever tried to manipulate or force a door? What happened?

"Friends of God who live by faith and consult the Lord are led by the Spirit into God's purposes. As a result, when I am unsure about my next step, I am neither immobilized by fear nor pressured to make something happen. I only want to follow Jesus through doors he has opened. And when He opens a door, I want to follow Him wherever He goes. And woe to the barriers that get in His way. But behind those doors, behold! The purposes of God!" -Brad Jersak, p. 186

Assignment:

If you are facing an important decision, stay in close communion with God and put these principles into action. If someone you know is facing a decision, share this with them.

“Can You Hear Me?”

Week 13

Can You Hear Me - Chapters 9: Listening Prayer with Children

Supplement - *Children Can You Hear Me?* by Brad Jersak

Review:

What is the purpose of having a “meeting place” of prayer with Jesus?

What are some examples of places where we can meet with the Lord?

Chapter 9: Listening Prayer With Children

What are the childlike qualities that you think are pleasing to the Lord?

As we read these scriptures together, ask the Holy Spirit to “highlight” anything that He especially wants to show us today.

Deuteronomy 29:29

Matthew 11:25-26

Matthew 18:2-5

Psalms 33:11

Psalms 145:4

Isaiah 11:6

Discuss what you sensed/heard, and then pray regarding this. (A promise to be claimed; a truth to thank God for; a hope to be asked for in faith)

Who is the most responsible for leading children into an intimate relationship with God?
(Deuteronomy 4:9; 11:18-19)

How can the church facilitate this process?

What usually blocks a child’s ability to hear God? (p. 188)

“It [hearing God] is normal. Children who can’t hear the Lord anymore (yes, *anymore*) have usually been inadvertently shut down by an adult.” (Brad Jersak, p. 188)

What are some ideas for encouraging a child’s heart to hear God’s voice?

Have you had the opportunity to use any of these with children in your life?

If you don’t have children at home, is there a friend whose children you could “borrow”?

“When you learn to hear God’s voice through [children], the secrets of the kingdom are just around the corner. Why? Because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.” (Brad Jersak, p. 194)

“Can You Hear Me?”

Week 14

Can You Hear Me - Chapter 10: Listening Prayer in the Local Church

Abiding Leads To Values

What is the difference between “fruit-focused” and “Vine-focused” vision?
Read John 15:4-5.

What are “values”?

What values are important to Jesus?

Has your church leadership identified church values? If so, what are the values God has called your church body to?

Is this vision fruit-focused or Vine-focused?

Does this sound like Jesus? –did He live by these values?

Listening Prayer: Jesus, If You were walking on the earth today, what would it look like, for You to be living according to these values?

Values Lead to God’s Vision

“True vision focuses on *God’s vision of who we are to be today*. It is ‘obeyable’ today and every day that the church exists.” (p. 197)

Notice the sense of “now” and “today” in these scriptures:

John 4:35

Luke 4:18, 21

Matthew 6:34

Does your church have a Vision Statement? What is it?

Does your Vision Statement clearly flow from the Purpose, or Value Statement?

Does it apply to today, or is it something yet to be achieved?

Does it describe God’s appointed call for your mission, ministries and fruit? I.e., How much does it encompass?

What are the “pillars” of your church? Are they people, target-groups, leaders, values, or a combination of these?

Listening Prayer:

Jesus, which mountaintop would you like to meet at? Why?

From this mountain, would you show me how our church looks to you?

How do you see our pastor?

Do you have a scripture or a word of encouragement for him/her?

Pray blessings over your church and its leadership.

Look for opportunities this week to bring encouragement to your church's pastor and staff.

“Can You Hear Me?”
Week 15

Can You Hear Me - Chapters 11-12: Listening Prayer and Outreach, Mercy and Justice

Review:

How is finding a “meeting place” a helpful way to intercede for others?

What does Jesus want us to do with burdens that we carry for others?

Read together the Summary section on page 154.

Identify: Is there a burden that this group can take to the Lord? (Perhaps a community-wide or church-wide issue.)

Begin to connect with the Lord’s heart about this burden, and ask Him how He feels. Follow the process from sorrow to release/joy.

Chapter 11 Discussion: Listening Prayer and Outreach

Why do we often balk at the thought of “doing evangelism”?

What principles of introducing Jesus do we see in the Woman at the Well?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Tuning In, page 212:

Three truths:

How did Jesus greet you?

Did His greeting identify a major heart-need? What was it?

By identifying the need in your heart, Jesus spoke “good news” personally to you. How would you rephrase that in the form of a promise?

What is His invitation to you *today* (not in the sweet by-and-by)?

Ask God to give you an open door to lead someone else into a meeting with Jesus.

Chapter 12: Mercy and Justice

What does Listening Prayer have to do with social justice?

Discuss the definitions, and how they relate to the “prophetic”:

Mercy (hesed)

Justice (tsadaq)

Peace (shalom)

“More than relief from darkness, peace is the presence of light.” (p. 221)

When we are in a place of social and spiritual darkness, what are some discerning questions that the mature prophet can ask?

Read and discuss the following scriptures:

Isaiah 1:13-17

Isaiah 58:2-10

Micah 6:6-8

James 1:27

Read Matthew 5:3-13

How do The Beatitudes relate to Mercy, Justice, and Peace?

“This text represents the distillation of the entire Jewish prophetic vision and supplies the ethical core and centre for all Christianity. We must not ignore, domesticate, sanitize, or censure this Magna Carta of our faith.” (Ron Dart, *Spirituality and Justice: the Vision of the Beatitudes*)

“Every claim to revelation should not only be strained through the written Word of God. It should also pass through the narrow gate of these ten verses before we appropriate it as a truly Christian message.” (Brad Jersak, pp. 228-229)

Mary Visits Elizabeth Luke 1:39-56
 Jesus' Birth Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-20
 Baptism Mark 1:9-11; Matt. 3:3-17
 Jesus' Temptation Mark 1:12-13; Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-15
 The Wedding at Cana John 2:1-12
 Jesus and the Samaritan Woman John 4:1-45
Lame Man is Healed Luke 4:16-30
 Jesus Heals Many Mark 1:29-39; Matt. 8:14-17; Luke 4:38-44; Matt. 4:23-25
 Faith of the Roman Officer Matt. 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10
 Jesus Anoints Sinful Woman Luke 7:36 – 8:3
 Jesus Calms the Storm Mark 4:35-41; Matt. 8:23-27; Luke 8:22-25
 Healing the Demon-Possessed Mark 5:1-20; Matt. 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39
Jesus Responds to Faith Mark 5:21-43; Matt. 9:18-26; Luke 8:40-56
 Jesus Feeds 5000 Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:3-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15
 Jesus Walks on Water Mark 6:45-56; Matt. 14:22-36; John 6:16-21
 Faith of a Gentleman Mark 7:24-30; Matt. 15:21-28
 Jesus Heals a Blind Man Mark 8:22-26
 The Transfiguration Mark 9:2-13; Matt. 17:1-13; Luke 9:28-36
 The Unforgiving Debtor Matt. 18:21-35
 The Cost Matt. 8:18-22; Luke 9:57-62
 Living Water John 7:37-39
 Light of the World John 8:12-20
 Jesus Sends Out Disciples Luke 10:1-20
 Good Samaritan Luke 10:3-37
 Martha and Mary Luke 10:38-42
 Jesus Heals Man Born Blind John 9:1-34
 Spiritual Blindness John 9:35-41
 The Good Shepherd John 10:1-21
 The Narrow Door Luke 13:22-30
 Lost Things Luke 15:1-32
 Children Blessed Mark 10:13-16; Matt. 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17
 Serving Mark 10:35-45
 Zacchaeus Luke 19:1-10
 Ten Servants Luke 19:11-27
 Anointed at Bethany Mark 14:3-9

See the story in your heart.
Step into the story.

Where is Jesus (God)?
What is He doing? ...
 Saying?

Where are you?

Are you one of the
characters?

What are you doing?

Come close and talk to
Jesus.

Live the story with Him.

Ask Him what the main
point of the story is.

Ask Him to show you a time
 when you saw this "main point"
 happening in your life.

Where was Jesus at that
event?

What was He doing?

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