

# Can You Hear Me?

Tuning in to the God who speaks

Leaders Guide

Sylvia McGuire  
ed. by B. Jersak



**“Can You Hear Me?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide**  
**Week 1**  
**Introductory Session**

Worship/Prayer

Why are you here?

*(Ask the group to share their journey.)*

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?

*( Ask the group to share a personal story about hearing God.)*

**John 10:2-5; 14-15; 27** *(Explain the context of this passage.)*

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 Method for Prayer** *(See “Listening Prayer” supplement)*

- 1- Be Still
- 2- Look
- 3- Listen
- 4- Journal (write it down)
- 5- Pray (from what God has said)

*(Encourage them, in this study, to make all four of these become their habit.)*

**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”?

*[Leader, explain: If so, God has given you freedom to share it. He has worked that verse into your life so that when you share it, it comes with His authority and anointing. This week ask Him if He would like you to share that verse with someone.*

*We are going to listen to God to speak through His word to us. When we ask Him a question He loves to answer, because He is a God who is committed to communicating with His kids. (Remember, we’re His sheep, and we hear His voice.) His voice usually comes to us in the form of spontaneous thought, like a flow of thoughts in our mind. That’s why it’s important for our minds to be surrendered to the Holy Spirit. We’re going to ask Him for a scripture. When a thought comes into your mind, believe that this is the Lord, because you have invited Him to speak. Usually His voice is the first thought enters after we ask Him a question. The next thoughts are usually ones that argue, because we have a hard time believing that it was really Him. So choose to believe the first thought.]*

*Choose one of these exercises:*

**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](http://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?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide  
Week 2**

***Can You Hear Me - Chapter 1- “My Sheep Hear My Voice”.***

Supplements: Sample chapter *Rivers from Eden* by Eden Jersak.

*How God Speaks* Handout

*Begin with a time of worship.*

**Hebrews 1:1-2**

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

*Discuss various ways that God speaks to His children. Allow the group to share from their own experiences. Be prepared to share some of your experiences with the group.*

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? Cf. *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)

*Read or sing the hymn: “In the Garden”*

*Pray, focusing on a time of thanksgiving for all the ways God has spoken directly to each of us. Invite God to come and communicate in fresh new ways.*

---

**Assignment:**

Leader: Encourage them to be working a little of the chapter each day, rather than saving it all for the day before class.

**Read Eden’s sample chapter.** (*Explain that this is not a standard. Everyone’s journal will be very unique. Ideas: drawings and collages, word studies, conversations with God. Make it according to your own personality, and don’t be a slave to it. The important thing is that it’s a way to 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](http://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?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide  
Week 3**

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

*Leader: if you have one, bring a copy of a book with meanings of names.*

*Begin with a time of worship.*

*Website for Meanings of names: [www.babynames.com/V5/](http://www.babynames.com/V5/)*

**Discuss the Chapter:**

**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?

*Read and discuss “Menu vs. Meal”*

**Psalm 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:** *Briefly explain the meaning of “Kairos Moments” or “divine appointments”*
- 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): *Do this exercise together.* Speak your first reaction to these symbols.

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

*Explain: Names are important symbols of identity in scripture. They give us clues into our identity and our destiny.*

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, [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?

*(Discuss the place of dreams and interpretation. Explain that throughout scripture this is one of God's primary means of communicating to his people.)*

**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

## 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?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide**  
**Week 4**

***Can You Hear Me - Chapter 2 - Awakened Hearts***, 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 through:

- A. His word, the Bible
- B. Messengers
- C. Life Circumstances  
Coincidences (“God-incidences”, symbols, parables)

**Chapter Discussion:**

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

*Explain that most people hear God in a predominant way, but that we need to be open to allowing Him to speak to us in any way He chooses. Briefly explain the three main ways people receive, or “tune in” to God’s voice: hearing, seeing and sensing. Ask them which way is the predominant way they receive His voice.*

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 vs. “our own thoughts”?

*“The bird’s song vs. the fly’s buzz” (p. 52)*

*John 10 – recognize*

2. **Seeing**

“No one has ever seen God” vs. “I saw the Lord always before me”

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? (*p. 54 the sun’s reflection in the lake analogy*)

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.

### **Discuss:**

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.

*Read together the supplemental worksheet, “Open the Eyes of My Heart”, and the blocks to seeing God listed here.*

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

*Enter into a time of silent prayer, waiting on God. Allow His peace to settle upon the group. Say, “Lord Jesus, will you reveal any false beliefs that have allowed unbelief and fear to shut my spiritual eyes? Please show me what these blocks are.” Confess these areas to one another as He brings them to mind, and repent of them.*

### ***Sing or Play:*** “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus”

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:**

This is the most common for most believers. “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 to a Window to Stepping in.

*Someone in the group read John 9:1-34 aloud while the others listen, eyes closed.*

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.



**“Can You Hear Me?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide  
Week 5**

***Can You Hear Me - Chapter 3 – “God Is That Really You?”***, pp. 65-76

**Review:** Have you experienced God’s voice through:

**Hearing?:**

How do we learn the difference between hearing God’s words (the inner voice in the form of thoughts, words, and sentences) and our own thoughts?

**Seeing?:**

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

*What does it mean to “see” God?*

*How is this possible?*

**Sensing?:**

*“I just know that I know.” Discernment; intuition; impressions; burdens; vibes; gut feelings.*

*Have you experienced sensing? How? When?*

**Blocks to hearing and seeing God:**

What are some of the ways that we allow blockages to our being able to clearly receive God’s communications with us?

**CHAPTER DISCUSSION:**

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

It’s important to see questions as an important tool for seeking God (faith), not as an expression of doubt.

**Testing God’s Voice:**

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

Romans 12:1-2 *the world*

Gal. 5:16-17 *the flesh*

Matt. 4:1-11 *the devil*

What is the last, separate category? *Mental illness*

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)*

## **The “ ‘D’ words” are never the Lord: Discouragement, Despair, Depression, Doubt**

### **His promises:**

Matthew 28:20 *I am with you always*

Joshua 1:5 *I will never leave you*

John 10:14,27 *I know you; You hear my voice*

Jeremiah 33:3 *I will answer you when you call on me*

Matt. 7:8-11 *When you ask for something, I’ll give you a good thing*

### **Posture of a Listener:**

A. Focused Attention -Psalm 46:10, Heb. 12:1-2 *Be still; fix eyes on Jesus*

B. Love-longing –Psalm 42:1-3, 7-8 *Deer panting; deep calls to deep; be desperate*

C. Humble Waiting –Heb. 4:9-11 *Be diligent to enter rest*

D. Letting it Be –Phil. 4:6-7; Ps. 46:10 *Don’t be anxious; be still*

E. Receptivity –John 15:4-5; James 1:5-8 *Abide in the Vine; receive wisdom expectantly*

### **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.

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”

### **GROUP PRACTICE:**

*(The “Tuning In” exercise on pg. 76)*

“Dial down” – be still.

What is Jesus’ message to you?

What do you see?

What is the nature of His voice? –His face?

*Next week: Testing the source, the content and the fruit (p. 76-90). “Can You Hear Me?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide*



**“Can You Hear Me?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide  
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. The Source](#)

[2. The Content](#)

[3. The Fruit](#)

**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?

*[“Is this really you, Jesus?”*

*Is Jesus glorified as Lord and King? Is His authority submitted to?]*

**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: *(Discuss and have them draw it here:)*

*A. The Bible*

*B. The Body of Christ*

*C. The Holy Spirit*

*D. Seat: Abiding*

### **A. THE BIBLE:**

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

Example: The Hubble telescope

John 21:25

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

*Discuss “sola scriptura”. What does this mean, and how has the Church practiced it?*

### **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 meet stand up to this test:

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

What is a “community of faith”?

*[“My perspective is that the true Body of Christ is a community that names Jesus as Lord and Savior, is in sincere pursuit of truth, and bears the fruit of the Spirit.”]*

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?

*[Historical issues of slavery, polygamy, military crusades]*

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

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

*Discuss what these verses do say and don’t say:*

*[Each believer has their own direct line to God vs. Extreme individualism.]*

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”: *[to faithfully remain in a humble and teachable state.]*

What is the importance of abiding? Why is it not always enough to proclaim a message with proof texts, agreement of other believers, and a warm feeling inside?

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?"

*1<sup>st</sup> Question:* "What is the immediate impact this word makes on me? I.e., How does it make me feel?"

*Are feelings to be discarded as untrustworthy? (Why?/Why not?)*

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?

**Question:** "What is the long-term influence of this word in my life? 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?

*[God's blessing.]*



**“Can You Hear Me?”**  
**Week 7 – Leader’s Discussion Guide**  
**Optional Summary of Chapters 1-3**

*Our purpose tonight will be to review 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.

Do you think He would make you in a way that you can’t hear and see Him? Do you think that just because you have a particular personality (or gender)? Why would he handicap someone from being able to boldly come before the throne of grace? (Hebrews 4:16) I challenge you to challenge any sources of doubt.

**“DIAL DOWN”** to a frequency where you can hear. (Leaves of thought settling to the earth.)

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

**ASK:** Lord Jesus, 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? *If so, God has given you freedom to share it. He has worked that verse into your life so that when you share it, it comes with His anointing.*

**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?

## ASK HIM:

Jesus, what excites you...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:

*It's OKAY to have a learning curve. God wants us to learn to hear His heart.*

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

(Discuss)

*Just ask.*

*Test the Source*

*Test the Content (3-legged stool)*

*Test the Fruit*

**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?"

**GROUP PRACTICE** Together, listen for one of the people in the group.

(Does it pass the 1 Cor. 14:3 test?)

## IN PAIRS:

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? (The "table of delights". Open your eyes to see it before you. What gift does my partner need that you would lay on that table? Have faith that He intends to give this, and He intends to give it through you.)

**“Can You Hear Me?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide  
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?

*[Test the source, the content and the fruit.*

*How do we test the source?*

*The content? (Stool illustration)*

*The fruit?]*

**Chapter Discussion:**

Remind them: “keep it simple”. This chapter needs to be received as a word of freedom and simplicity; He gifts us with imagination as part of our God-given ability to engage in conversation with Him.

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: Accusation: “You’re just making this up” – birds snatch it away and produce doubt.*

*Rocky places: Defiance and independent thinking. “I can be wise and right aside from either influence.” We create a 3<sup>rd</sup>, neutral voice: “Just Me”.*

*Thorns: The word, which was meant as an entry point into relationship, is choked by our schedules.*

*We’re too busy to take the time to enter into conversation.*

*Good soil: “Is it true?” - Engage the word, weigh it, start a conversation with God, then begin to lean on it and act upon it until it bears good fruit.*

*Asking, “Is that God or my imagination?” is like asking, “Is that water or is that blue?” The answer is “Yes.” (If necessary for more explanation, Romans 8)*

**What is the better question?**

*[“Is it true?”]*

**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?

*[See James 1:13-15 - Lusting, coveting]*

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

Creativity: *[artists, composers, writers, dancers, inventors, discoverers]*

Recreation: *[renewal of body, soul and spirit, meant to be “re-creative”]*

Meditation: *[dwelling through picturing and pondering spiritual truth – an aspect of God or his Word]*

Intercession: *[picturing the person we are praying for and presenting that picture to God.]*

### **Seeing Through Inner Windows:**

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

[Moving from “active imagination”, where we engage our imaginations to see Him by faith, to “passive imagination”, where our meditations transition into revelations. –John 14:21]

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?

*[fantasies and deception-cause dissatisfaction, fear, escapism and distraction; psychic or demonic discernment-which are forbidden by God and bring distortion of truth, bondage, defilement, and ultimately destruction]*

**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 surrender.

### **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?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide**  
**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](http://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:**

If someone shared with you about something that they heard or saw while in prayer, and then they ended with, “I don’t know if it was ‘just me’ or God”...what would you tell them?

**Chapter Discussion:**

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

*A place, physical, historical, or spiritual – where we meet with Jesus to “Behold and Be Held”.*

**Read together:**

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...”

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,.. (C. Austin Miles, 1912; “In the Garden”)*

**Examples of Meeting Places in the Bible:**

Images - *Psalm 23; the Throne; Zech. 12:10 – seeing the Lord on the cross*

Locations – *mountains, trees, rivers, altars....*

Events – *Biblical stories; step into them*

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?

*“Where were you when that happened?”*

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

*When he reveals where and how he was there, he brings healing.*

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

## **Visions and Dreams** – *Discuss:*

Materialistic worldview:

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”? (*1 Cor. 3:16*) – *we are.*

*It is a tragedy that we haven't found a better application than “Thou shalt not smoke”!*

**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:**

*Jesus speaking: (3:20)- Look! Behold! (I.e. obey!) – Open the eyes of your heart!*

Jesus is saying, “We'll share a meal together as friends. You talk; I talk. You listen; I listen.

*John responding: (4:1-2) Obeying, phrase by phrase: I looked, I walked through the door, I beheld, I heard, I came.*

*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.*

*Read aloud Revelation 3:18 – 4:11. Revelation is a book meant to be seen. God supplies the images; we simply behold. Have them close their eyes, as you slowly read through this passage. Encourage them to step into the vision: to ask for eye salve; to open the door; to go through the door; to picture God; to see where they are in the picture; to ask God questions.*

## **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 (imeditateî) (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

Shaun McCarty is a Missionary Servant of the Most Holy Trinity who teaches in the Department of Pastoral Studies, Washington Theological Union. He is also an associate staff member, Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, Washington, D.C.

For complete reading of this article, see: SPIRITUALITY TODAY Autumn 1987, Vol. 39  
<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?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide**  
**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@ywamaassociates.com.

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

**Group Practice:**

*(Be sure to let this flow from the group; don't over-manage it.) We have often used “ACTS” as a template/acronym for Adoration – Confession – Thanksgiving – Supplication. Let's turn this into a fresh new prayer experience of listening-prayer. What are some questions we can use for:*

Adoration: *Lord, what aspect of your character do you want me to behold today?*

Confession: *Lord, is there anything that is displeasing to you in my life? (Be sure to follow this up with the next question: “What are you happy with about me?”) –or, “Jesus, if my heart is your home, is there anything that needs to be cleaned up? Is there anything I've missed, or taken for granted?”*

Thanksgiving: *Jesus, what is exciting you these days?*

Supplication: *Is there someone you want me to pray for today? Who? What meeting place would you like me to take them to right now? (Strong tower; River of healing) How do you see \_\_\_\_\_? What would you say to \_\_\_\_\_? Why?*

*How do you see this situation?*

**Review:**

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

“Sharing something that you believe God has shown you.” (p. 64)

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

*“If your motive is love, your purpose is encouragement, and your content is Scriptural, then you cannot miss. Love + Encouragement + Scripture = Bulls Eye!” (p. 64)*

A word from God should bring strength, encouragement, and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3) (see p. 87)

**Chapter Discussion:**

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

The God-given ability to feel and carry someone else's burdens (p. 147).

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.

*Rather than “Put up with one another” this is saying, “Stake yourselves to one another.”*

*I'm not going to let you carry this heavy weight alone. I'm going to come alongside you, stake my faith to yours, stake my prayers to yours, and together we'll receive Christ's strength.*

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. (Romans 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 payer, 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):

*The Lord makes us aware of someone's burdens and calls us to share their emotional and spiritual load. – We bring the load to the cross and deliver it to Him as an act of intercession. – He lifts the burden from us, bearing its weight Himself. – He releases comfort and healing to the one for whom we're praying; we receive it.*

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? *(The remedy: focus on Jesus. Ask Him, "How do you feel about this?")*

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

- *"Jesus, what is this about?"*
- *"Jesus, how do you feel about this?" (turn focus to His heart; enter into the fellowship of His suffering. He validates their pain, sorrow, or anger, but in absolute purity.)*
- *"Lord, let your heart be comforted." Draw near to Him. Wait on His peace.*
- *We are comforted and strengthened, and so is the person for whom we're praying.*

*"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)

- *Eyes are fixed on Jesus rather than the problem.*
- *Christ's perspective on the problem may be quite different from that of the person we're praying for. As we align our heart with the Lord's, the yoke becomes lighter.*
- *We can offer comfort directly to Jesus; He has no self-protective walls.*
- *His peace and comfort flows back to our hearts.*
- *Grace is released to the ones in need. (Healing, breakthroughs, freedom)*
- *He leads us through the sorrow into comfort, hope and promise, without getting stuck in their sorrow.*

*"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?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide 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)

“Whenever we feel blocked in our ability to hear, it is because something exists in our heart that God wants us to see.”

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.

#### **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. *“Lord Jesus, what is in my heart? ... is anything hindering my ability to hear you? If so, please show me what it is. What does this block feel like? What does it look like?”* (Look for a picture, Listen for a word, Sense an impression)
- Ask God to show you where the block came from. *“Jesus, how did that block get there? When is the first time it came? Is there a lie attached?”*
- Ask God how it can be removed. *“Lord, what needs to happen in order for this to be removed? Are there things You need to say/do to remove it? (reveal truth) Are there things we need to pray/say/do to remove it? (Is there sin I need to confess and repent of? Is there someone I need to forgive? Do I need to make restitution? Is there a vow or judgment I need to renounce?)”*

(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.

*It’s “just me”, or “I can’t”. “This just doesn’t make sense.”*

Can you think of examples from Jesus’ life of times when He spoke things that didn’t make sense to

His hearers? (*Nicodemus – “You must be born again.” Fishermen/disciples: “Cast your net to the other side.” Religious leaders: “I’ll raise up this temple in 3 days.”*) Why did He speak this way? Should we also expect Him to speak to us in ways that are difficult for our rational minds to grasp?

Remedy: 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?

*Fear of the unknown, of deception, of intimacy, of repercussions*

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? (*shrink back from God*)

How is it similar to fear? (*lies are behind it*) “*I’m worthless, unclean, shameful, I don’t measure up*”.

Remedy:

- 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

Remedy:

- Ask Jesus where it first came in.
- Our pain will cease to block out God’s voice as soon as we honestly confess it to Him.
- Sometimes Jesus will lift it away for you first.

**Confusion/Demonic spirits:** poison the soil with confusion or darkness

What causes these blocks? *The turmoil of our own racing minds; demonic interference (sometimes accompanied by specific body pain).*

Remedy:

- 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? [misrepresent Christ or to give us bad advice in His name.](#)

- 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

Remedy:

- 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?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide  
Week 12**

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

**Review:**

At a conference this past week I taught the people to listen to God, through asking Him some simple questions and waiting for God’s response. Afterwards, someone asked the question, “I don’t know if I was hearing God or if it was just me.” What would you tell that person?

**Chapter Discussion:**

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

*“God can’t steer a parked car” – Christian deism, no specific direction from God beyond common sense and biblical principles.*

*“Sit tight until God does something” – Paralyzed with indecision or fear until they receive specific direction or permission from God.*

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 who live by faith and consult the Lord are led by the Spirit into God’s purposes.*

**FRIENDS OF GOD...**

*The primary function of listening prayer:*

*To maintain an intimate relationship with God (not to get you out of a jam).*

*“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 living and continues by faith.

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

The Holy Spirit

How does the Holy Spirit help us?

*What role does peace play in the Spirit’s guidance?*

**...AND CONSULT THE LORD...**

2 Samuel 5:17-25:

*Take time to still your hearts before God. Read 2 Samuel 5:17-25 aloud, while the group closes its eyes and listens to God.*

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?”

*Allow the group to share what they saw and heard.*

*You might find it helpful to follow up their discussion with these questions:*

*What was David’s practice when he was met with an enemy?*

*What might David have been tempted to do the 2<sup>nd</sup> time the Philistines threatened the kingdom?*

*What do you think God was showing David the 2<sup>nd</sup> time?*

“Consulting God includes *living daily in conversation with Him.*”

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

*Lord, what is the best use of my day?*

*Is there anything you want me to do today?*

*Is there anyone I’m supposed to meet today?*

**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?

*Use our free will...by faith, Spirit-filled.*

*Listen to God’s voice...obey and follow.*

*His will is not a destination 10 years down the road.*

*“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 *idol in our hearts.*

Even a prayer request can be an idol. What is the key to keeping pure motives?

*Focus on Jesus. Surrender to His will.*

**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?

*Pay close attention to what happens in our hearts as we start “pushing the door”:*

- 1. If it’s satanic or natural obstacles barring a door that God has opened... faith, prayer, and diligence will dislodge the obstacles. God’s Spirit will rise up with boldness.*
- 2. If the Lord is shutting the door, we will sense striving, manipulating and forcing something to happen.*

Good question to ask: “God, are you the source of this opposition? What is the source?”

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?

*Someone once said there are 4 ways God answers prayer:*

- 1. No, not yet.*
- 2. No, I love you too much.*
- 3. Yes, I thought you'd never ask.*
- 4. Yes, and there's more!*

*“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*



**“Can You Hear Me?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide**  
**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?  
To “behold and be held”

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

*Biblical images, events, and locations; physical locations; personal memories; visions and dreams; your heart; God Himself - a Shelter; a High Tower; a Refuge; a River*

**Listening Prayer Exercise:**

*Spend some time together in Listening Prayer.*

*Start with a simple song, opening our hearts and inviting God’s presence. Invite the group to be still. (Take a few minutes to allow “the leaves” in their minds to settle to the ground, and to center on the Lord.)*

*Invite them to go to their meeting place with the Lord. Ask Jesus: “Where would you like to meet with me today?” After a minute ask them if they’ve all found a place to be with Jesus.*

*Say, “Where’s Jesus? – Where are you?”*

*Ask Jesus, “Why are we meeting here?”*

*“Is there something you want to tell me? – Why?”*

*“Is there something you want to show me? – Why?”*

*“Is there someone you want to show me or speak to me about? - Why?”*

*End this time with thanksgiving, thanking Jesus for always being with us; for being our close companion who is always speaking and teaching. Ask God’s blessing on all that has been spoken.*

**Chapter 9: Listening Prayer With Children**

*The Leader can read the first five pages of Children Can You Hear Me? to the group.*

*The choose your favorite illustration and share from your heart where it touched the child inside.*

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 most responsible for leading children into intimate friendship with God? (Deut. 4:9, 11:18-19)  
How can the church facilitate this process?

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

*Their parents' own unbelief.*

“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)

*Discuss the possibility that as parents of older children, we often carry unresolved guilt. If appropriate, lead them in a time of allowing the Lord to lift any burdens of guilt:*

*The Lord does not want us to carry a burden of guilt or regret. Only God is the “perfect Parent”, and He has prodigals. In the course of this lesson, has the Holy Spirit convicted you of any sin you committed in your parenting? If so, maybe now would be a good time to experience His forgiveness.*

*(Lead them to the Cross as a meeting place.)*

*Jesus, are you willing to take and carry the burden of my sin?*

*Jesus, please lay your wounded hand on my burden, and carry it away to the Cross.*

*Encourage them to continue to give the burden to him until it is all gone.*

*Lord Jesus, is there a gift you want to replace this burden with? What is it? Why do you want to give me that gift?*

*Please fill me with the gift you have just promised.*

*Thank you, Lord.*

**“Can You Hear Me?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide**  
**Week 14**

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

*Our purpose in this discussion is to come alongside the leadership God has placed in authority, and to bless them. Be very careful to avoid critical attitudes and unhealthy comparisons with other church leaders and bodies.*

**Abiding Leads To Values**

What is the difference between “fruit-focused” and “Vine-focused” vision?

*With “fruit-focus”, we project our church goals, identify them as vision, then develop plans to meet those goals. It is so forward-focused that no one ever arrives, and it leads to striving and burnout.*

Read John 15:4-5.

What are “values”?

*They precede vision. They connect you to the Vine. They are who you are, and how you live.*

What values are important to Jesus?

Has your church leadership identified church values? *[You might want to discuss this with your pastor or leadership]* If so, what are the values God has called your church body to?

*e.g. Faith Christian Community: Purpose Statement –*

*FAITH: Believing God for great things.*

*CHRISTIAN: Honoring Jesus with our lives.*

*COMMUNITY: Loving and serving one another.*

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? *[You may want to call your pastor or church leadership to help you with this.]*

*e.g. Faith Christian Community’s Vision Statement – To be a life-giving community connecting with Jesus and one another, to offer salvation, hope and healing to Anchorage and the world.*

*Inward Focus: Recruiting people into church ministries.\**

*Outward Focus: Releasing ministry\* into the community.*

*\*Ministry Focus: Connecting with one another to reach out to our world. Rather than recruiting members to church programs, our goal is to inspire, empower and equip followers of Jesus to serve Him in their sphere of influence, both within and outside the walls of Faith Christian Community.*

Does this 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?” – Leader’s Discussion Guide**  
**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 - Listening Prayer and Outreach**

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

*“We think that evangelism is about convincing others of something we believe rather than witnessing about someone we have met.” (p. 207)*

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

*1. You’ve Met Jesus.*

*Personal encounter in the meeting place of your heart.*

*Question: “Jesus, if I bring my friend to meet you, will you show yourself and speak to them for me?”*

*2. Others are seeking to meet Him.*

*Contrast “seekers” with “the crowd” . What is Jesus’ promise to seekers?*

*3. You can lead seekers to meet Him.*

*We have both permission and mandate to do this.*

*“Why not let HIM share the gospel with them? You just need to get them there!” (p. 209)*

*Read “Is This for Real?” section (p. 212)*

**Tuning In, page 212:**

*First, Go over the exercise.*

*Discuss the 3 truths this exercise brings to the forefront:*

*1. It reveals your greatest need*

*2. It frames the gospel specifically to you*

*3. It is good news to be received today.*

*Now, do the exercise:*

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?

(P. 219 quote by Ron Dart)

What is a mark of a truly mature biblical prophet? (Message includes mercy, justice, and peace – personal and public.)

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

### **Mercy** (*hesed*)

*God’s active care – his lovingkindness and compassion towards the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized.*

### **Justice** (*tsadaq*)

*Fair treatment and active equity for all; “making things right”. Biblical justice is not only retributive, but also preventative and restorative.*

*It is NOT the opposite of grace. It is God’s character.*

*What is meant by “Prophetic justice”? (p. 220)*

*How are mercy and justice linked? (p. 221) Justice gets to the cause (asks “why”).*

*Discuss the place of understanding God’s justice when it comes to our ability to extend forgiveness. (We trust God with the other person(s); let it go; relinquish our justice to Him.)*

### **Peace** (*shalom*)

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

*Not merely the absence of war, but the presence of mercy and justice.*

*The byproduct of doing justice and loving mercy. (Micah 6:6-8)*

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).

*Return to the issue that the group prayed for at the beginning of the session. Take it to Jesus with this focus on His mercy and justice. See if He gives further insight. Use the Tuning In questions on Pg. 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?

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?  
 Mary Visits Elizabeth Luke 1:39-56  
 Jesus' Birth Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 2:

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