

## **How Does God talk to you....and When He does, do you Answer?**

These questions get asked often and can range from those who do not think they have heard from God to those wanting to compare notes.

There are ways He communicates with us in general. I believe there are two major categories.

The first is when God stirs our hearts to come to him, and to do His will after we have accepted Jesus. He will do this even if we don't ask.

The second is in response to our requests within the context of each request, just not always the response we want. This means we also need to consider how we talk to God.

Each of us needs to have a personal relationship with God. This requires communication on a personal level. Because God has a plan for each of our lives, He will help us communicate with Him so we can carry it out.

We are not all the same. (Paul tells us in I Corinthians we are all members of the same body...important but different...all have same Holy Spirit... given different gifts and calling.)

We may not always respond right the first time. We may wait when we should not, or move forward on our own when we should wait. The results when we miss the mark can be painful, even disastrous. It is therefore essential that we ask, listen, and obey. The good news is that we can get better at listening and obeying as we go along. To help us along there are vast amounts of Bible verses, sermons, books, topics for lessons, study groups, etc.

### **Here are some ways God talks to us.**

Through the Holy Spirit. Jesus sent Him to live with/in us.

By studying the Bible. It is God's word.

Through other people. We sometimes get confirmation.

The world around us bears witness. How could this happen by chance?

**Here are some ways we talk to God.**

In our closet. Alone with God.

In groups. Praying to God in agreement with each other.

Not like the Pharisees. Praying just for the sake of being heard by men.

Having the right motive. According to God's will. Not riches for our own use.

Persistent. Keep asking. Jesus tells us to do that.

Following is a real life account where God's ways of communication all blended together as one. Each form of communication is used for a different piece of just one purpose.

After accepting Jesus at an early age and following Him for a while, for some reason the conscious decision was made to go it alone without him. This ended after moving with my family to a place for the sole purpose of seeking money. I know now that he was still there all along. God was patient enough to let me do that, and kind enough to have my plans come crashing down around me. After over 40 years going it alone, it became clear that this was not a good idea.....

I Prayed for God to take me home for several weeks, and meant it.

And then came into my mind a sentence, Response 1 below, that shook me to my very foundation. Actually, it was more than a strong hint that I did not have a foundation.

The inner voice was obviously not mine. I just knew it was from God. Like this first one, all communication from God to me has been short and to the point. He has always shown me the way to understanding His meaning. (He makes me miserable until I ask what to do to make the current misery go away, and I do it.)

The following are multiple responses that came from the many prayers for the same request-- to be taken from this world to Heaven. It became apparent after some time that things happen according to God's timing, not ours.

**Response 1: You may want to re-assess your relationship with God.**

God is kind, patient, and just. He was telling me what to do so he could fully answer my prayer. You see, there was a flaw in my plan that needed some fixing.

I did not reply back as such, but could not wait to get started. Talk about starting from the beginning, for some reason I went on a search to reconcile for myself the issue of creationism vs. evolution (no Berean attitude here. See Acts 17:11).

After several days the conclusion was obvious. Creationism one.... evolution zero. Faith won, everything else lost.

The search was on. I was trying to do it all myself without sharing what happened with anyone but God. Looking back surely God was rolling His eyes, if he does that kind of thing. The most surprising thing is how easy it was before to go along without realizing how very little I knew about anything having to do with God. No wonder He had me take a new look.

### **Response 2: You need to spread Joy.**

Here I was, so disgusted with this life that I just wanted God to cut it short, and now am tasked with spreading Joy. But having started a new relationship, there was no turning back this time.

This time I asked questions. To my surprise, I got immediate answers. Again the same voice. Short and to the point.

Without a full understanding at the time what was meant by Joy I had learned enough by now to know the meaning would be made clear.

Me: How do I do that?

God: Through your works.

Uh....here is this works thing popping up.

Me: What works is that?

God: As a facilitator.

Me: How do I do that?

God: As bees make honey.

Whoa..... say what? As we know, bees make food for themselves, and a surplus. In the process of doing that, they help pollinate flowers that produce fruit to eat, and seeds to sow new crops. This meant for me to help those who help others, and practice stewardship in my affairs. All this in only 4 words.

Me: Okay, where do I start?

God: Get out of debt and learn.

In other words, put the “as bees make honey” thing into motion. I stumbled here, but the real issue is not the stumbling, but in getting up and growing closer to God for it. God

disciplines his children. This gives much hope, even while there is pain. For about a year I prayed, read, searched the Internet, and still generally felt there was something missing. I began to wonder if God was still there. And then.....

### **Response 3: You need to go public.**

I knew exactly where this came from. Same voice, short and to the point. By now I knew everyone should be planted in a Church. Going it alone is not the way. Belonging to a local Church and the fellowship and learning that go with it is as necessary for our spiritual life as eating is to our physical one.

My son and his family go to a local Church. I went to visit the Pastor there, kicking and screaming, but knew it had to be. He is a kind man with a great big heart. That was necessary because I drove him crazy for a little while. I was a spiritual baby in a grown-up physical body. Now it is my Church, and I try to listen more than talk. It seems to work better that way.

### **Response 4: Fight the devil.**

I knew there was a devil, but after years of being told about him, that was about the extent of it.

So I asked how He wanted me to do that.

His answer for me was one word: Humility.

As it turns out, being humble is a never-ending work in process. Pride, resentment, etc. will pop up at every opportunity. We improve here by the grace of God. By keeping our eye on Jesus and asking for help we can close doors and bring down the devil's strongholds.

As life goes on it is possible for us all to grow spiritually and move on from spiritual "milk" to more "solid" food. After bending the ear of a fellow member for a while (when he had somewhere else to go) this kind man said to me "All I can say about that is, 'listen....and obey'". He summed up what I had struggled for 4 years to get to in three words.

### **CONFIRMATION.**

When the Holy Spirit speaks, we should be able to find confirmation in scripture. If what we hear is not based on scriptural truth, the voice is probably not His.

James, a brother of Jesus, has this to say about seeking God, Joy, being humble, resisting the devil, and doing works:

*James 4:1-8 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but*

*you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

Also:

*James 1:2-8 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.*

Also:

*James 2:14-17 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

To paraphrase the results of my prayer(s) to have God take me away in today's terms, He personalized it for me:

**So, you want to come to Me. I would like that, but first you need to have a closer personal relationship with Me. Then you need to finish the work I have set aside for you on Earth. While you are doing this you need to resist the devil because he will not leave you alone if there is anything he can do to trash you. And by the way, keep up the conversations and obey Me even when you don't immediately hear from Me.**

God answers prayers. When others don't seem to have time, or inclination, to listen when we need some fellowship or advice He is always there and always interested in helping us. Sometimes He wants us to help others.

We should share our conversations with God with others when He urges us to. Sometimes it may be best to let them remain with us. For example when the meaning is only apparent within a context either to spread out or too personal to make sense, or to be of any value, to others.

*Luke 2:16-20 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.*

Also:

*Matthew 6:5-6 And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

But: Sometimes we talk to God as a group on behalf of others.

*Acts 12:5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.*

I think it is a good thing for all of us to spread joy, and a great thing for us to have for ourselves.

**JOY: Comes from our positive relationship with God. Unlike Happiness, it is present in good times and bad.**

By John Oliver  
a grateful and unworthy servant