

A disciple who hears the voice of God

1. How does a disciple hear the voice of God more and more?

A **soft and tender** heart is a key to hearing and recognizing the voice of God.

A **hard heart or hardened heart** can keep us from hearing his voice. A hard heart is not a willful and stubborn refusal to believe God, but an inability to perceive and understand at a spiritual level, it is a dullness to perceive that leads to spiritual blindness.

Seeing miracles does not cure the hardened heart (people who saw the resurrection of Lazarus). Mark 6:51 Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. 48He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, 49but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, 50because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

51Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, 52for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

They had not understood the miracle about the loaves because their hearts were hardened. Mark 8:17. After the second multiplication of loaves Jesus has to ask them again, is your heart still hardened?

In Luke 8 Jesus tells the parable of the seeds that fell on different grounds, the ones that fell by the wayside describe what happens to the voice (word, seed) of God when it lands on a hard heart. (Wayside is the path in a garden where we walk between rows of plants)

What can harden our hearts? To close our hearts to a person in need Deut 15:7, Sin hardens the heart Heb 3:13, neglecting the rudimentary elements of the Christian faith (prayer, reading the scriptures, tithing, faithfulness to God's house...) and Luke 21:34 Jesus points at carousing (dissipation), drunkenness and the **cares of this life**.

The cares of this life are not wrong or evil, but the normal daily challenges of life apart from him. All we have to do to get a hardened heart is to be under the cares of this life in a mundane way and not in intimate relationship with God.

PAUSE AND PRAY FOR SOFT HEART.

Spending time in the **word** with the Holy Spirit, **Fasting** are two important keys to Soften the heart.

2. To hear means to obey

Shema in Hebrew means to hear, to listen, to take heed, to obey, to do what is asked, to respond with action to what is heard.

In English to hear or to listen is to perceive the sounds. In Hebrew to hear and to obey are the same word. In the old testament most of the places where you see the word obey or be obedient is this word Shema... Hear, listen

Hearing then is not an intellectual exercise of perceiving the voice of God with great accuracy into the mysteries of the Kingdom. **Hearing means obeying**, and is the **response from the heart** with appropriate actions to what was spoken.

To obey is to hear, the more you obey the more you hear...

Jesus answering the question about the greatest commandment said in Mark 12:29... the Shema... Hear oh Yisrael the Lord our God the Lord is One, you shall love the lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength, this is the first commandment and the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself, there is no greater commandment than these. (Deut 6:4, Lev 19:18)...

Shema, Hear and obey.

- Mark 9:7 on the mount of transfiguration... this is my son whom I love, listen to him.

- Heb 3:15 Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts...

- Jer 5:21, Isa 6:10, Eze 12:2, Acts 28:27, Mark 8:18

- James 1:22 Be doers of the word and not hearers only...

- John 14:15 if you love me you will obey my commandments...

- Matt 13:11 "The knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. This is why I speak to them in parables: 'Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.'

Jesus speaks in dreams, visions, parables, story because it is the language of the heart. It reveals truth to some and hides it from others depending on the condition of the heart.

The more you obey/truly hear the more he gives, but he is not piling on more "accountability" problems until you obey the last things he's told you.

Ex of asking your child to please wipe down the table (they don't do it), and take the trash out (they don't do it), put your shoes away, write a letter to grandma, and you keep piling on things to do and they still haven't done the first thing... that's not good parenting.

Friendship with Jesus comes after you have learned to be a "servant" and obey/hear. John 15:14.

3. Prayer or Tefillah (Tefillot) / Increasing hearing the voice of God

Story of 2 people with important news and things to say. They want to say what is on their hearts so much that they can't really hear from the heart what the other is saying. Couples who are preoccupied and so deep in a problem, that the other one has to say, you are not hearing me... you heard what I said, but not from the heart.

We must lay down our own burdens, thoughts, preoccupations, needs etc... to really be with God and hear him. When our own voice is too loud we can't hear God's voice. To increase hearing the voice of God, let's talk about what he wants...

Many types of prayer (intercession, petitioning, confession...) all good and valid. The word for prayer in Hebrew is Tefillah and it means to self evaluate, to examine yourself, to come before God and see things from his perspective, compare your action, behavior, attitude against God's holiness and adjust your thinking, attitude, mind, actions... prayer then is not a time to ask God for things, but a time to examine yourself in his presence (the light of his face shine upon you). Prayer is used to compare your action, behavior and attitude against God's holiness.

Jewish prayer requires one to take a long, hard and honest look at himself in the shadow of God's Presence where nothing can be hidden and it is not self centered introspection. We become like the one we gaze upon, and spend time with and that is the power of Tefillah (meditation prayer). Set aside our inner conversation, and come with the need to hear him.

Tefillah is understood to be the Labor of the heart, it is the labor of awakening the hidden love within the heart until we have intimate union with God. (Love the lord with all your heart...)

Prayer in English implies two distinct entities, an inferior one petitioning (or making a request) to a superior one. This is terribly inaccurate as there is another word in Hebrew for making a request which is bakasha (request, pleading). Also worship or praise Shevach is different but Tefillah (prayer) includes both of them but is neither of them. **Communion** would be a better translation, indicating a joining together of the heart and mind and spirit. This can happen at any time any place as long as it comes from the heart. Whether you praise, bless, request, or talk to God, it must come from the heart with genuine awareness of his presence. In communion prayer God owes us nothing, we are not making demands or else we will be on strike against God, but we come and receive everything as a gift.

Jesus tells us that he only says what he hears the father say, and he does what he sees the father do, and he goes where the father leads. This is the result of Communion prayer Tefillah. In the garden of Gethsemane the conclusion is not my will but yours be done John 5:19, John 14:31, John 6:38, John 10:30, Matthew 26:39.

To know what the Father says, does, thinks... we need to commune like Jesus did, which means time, and laying down of our own will for his.

To hear his voice spend time with God, His word and his spirit.

I recognize Lori's voice anywhere because I have heard it so much... I spent a lot of time listening her voice. Same with God.

We need to spend a lot of time hearing his voice one on one with the Gospels and his Word, so we can recognize his still small voice in the midst of all the voices in our busy

lives. To increase hearing God's voice all the time and everywhere we first need to recognize it in the quiet place.

Prov 3:5

There is an invitation from the Father to us to come into his presence because of Jesus. The way we approach him is through his mercy. Jesus teaching his disciples to pray...

Awe, fear of the Lord, reverence on the one side and an invitation from a loving father, trustworthy confidant, encouraging and loyal friend to privately be intimate with Him. Both attribute of God (middat hadin which is the justice of God, and middat harachamim which is the mercy of God) are used to address both his awesome glory presence and his invitation to intimate fellowship (yadah).

When something is broken like a camera, it no longer functions as it was made to, to throw it away would be justice, to bring it to the repair shop and have parts changed and replaced appeals to the Mercy of God.

We approach our father through his mercy, we don't "work" like we were made to originally (sin, weakness, brokenness, wrong thinking...) but in his presence and because of his mercy, he changes us into his image, his mind, his heart (he repairs us in his great mercy).

Choose a special room in your house, a chair, a time, and atmosphere that is special for you and for God for encounter (set apart). Worship, praise, thanksgiving, pray the word, meditate, journal (story your gratitude), rehearse his promises and your history with him as well as miracles and golden memories.

COMMUNION PRAYER ...enter his presence with no agenda except to be with him and hear/obey his voice and grow in love with him. Start intimate communion with him.

Then practice hearing/listening to his voice everywhere (workplace, home, coffee shop, MKF...) set aside your own agenda, your own voice, interest, burdens and busyness and listen to his voice, his word, his heart for the people and places around you.

Your love for people will grow, and you will grow in the "prophetic" which is the gift of hearing God's voice and speaking it on the earth.

Hearing his voice and his presence leads to love him more and love people more... if not question what you are hearing.