

HOW GOD APPEALS TO US

John 10:26-27 ... “But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

In our previous study, we discussed the voice of the Lord and how we might not hear it if our words to him are irreverent. Today we will consider some of the ways that God tries to get our attention and communicate to us. Prayer is not the only way in which we share our feelings with God, or through which he communicates to us. There are other equally valuable ways to hear from him.

Of great importance is the Word of God, your Bible. God fully understood that the humans he created would fall victim to sin and, by necessity, that would separate us from him. God chooses not to be in the presence of sin, or to coddle us when we yield to temptation or our own corrupt nature. With direct communication suspended when we are in a sinful state, we needed another way of hearing from God to empower us to repent. He gave us his Word to help us when we are struggling and when we have pushed ourselves away from God's presence. The Scriptures clarify for us the love and authority of God, the steps to return to him, and the guidelines for remaining obedient to him. When you feel distant from God and you cannot hear him speaking to you, go to your Bible and find out why. The answer is there.

Another vital tool that God uses to communicate to us, is through his Holy Spirit. Every believer is given the gift of the Holy Spirit to reside in his or her soul, and to guide us through life's hard choices and decisions. The Holy Spirit will never leave you, even when you are pushing away from God. But, to hear the Spirit, you must be willing to listen. You can shut down the Holy Spirit's voice if you choose to. It's like removing the battery from your phone when you wish to stop receiving calls.

Another way that God communicates to us is through other believers. Of course, you must be careful in who you trust. But if your direct communication with God has been suspended because of sin, if you are not studying your Bible, and you have shut-down the Holy Spirit, another believer might be used by God to appeal to you on behalf of him. It could be a pastor, relative, friend, or even a complete stranger. If you want to hear from God, and he sends another believer to convict you, the Holy Spirit will then awaken your spirit to confirm if the other person is speaking truth or not. Your sincere intent to return to God's protection and listen to him, will reactivate his Spirit in you and guide you back to harmony with Christ.

Today's passage from John is an important reminder of to whom God communicates. We learn first that if you do not believe in Christ, you do not belong to him. An unbeliever may never hear from God directly, but the Bible and followers of Christ can still reach the unsaved. We also learn from this passage that those of us who belong to Christ, know his voice and follow him. If you have never heard God speaking to your heart; if the Holy Spirit does not speak to you and the Bible confuses you, then you are not one of his sheep; you have not been born again. To hear from God, to enjoy the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and to understand the Bible, you must be one of Christ's sheep. If you are not one of his sheep, I pray you will join the flock today.

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