

HEARING GOD'S VOICE

Created to be in conversation with God

Saved because God speaks

Never without His voice

Hearing = speaking + listening + the word

Creative God - creative dialogue



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Genesis 1-3

Consider the relationship between God and Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. What do you notice?

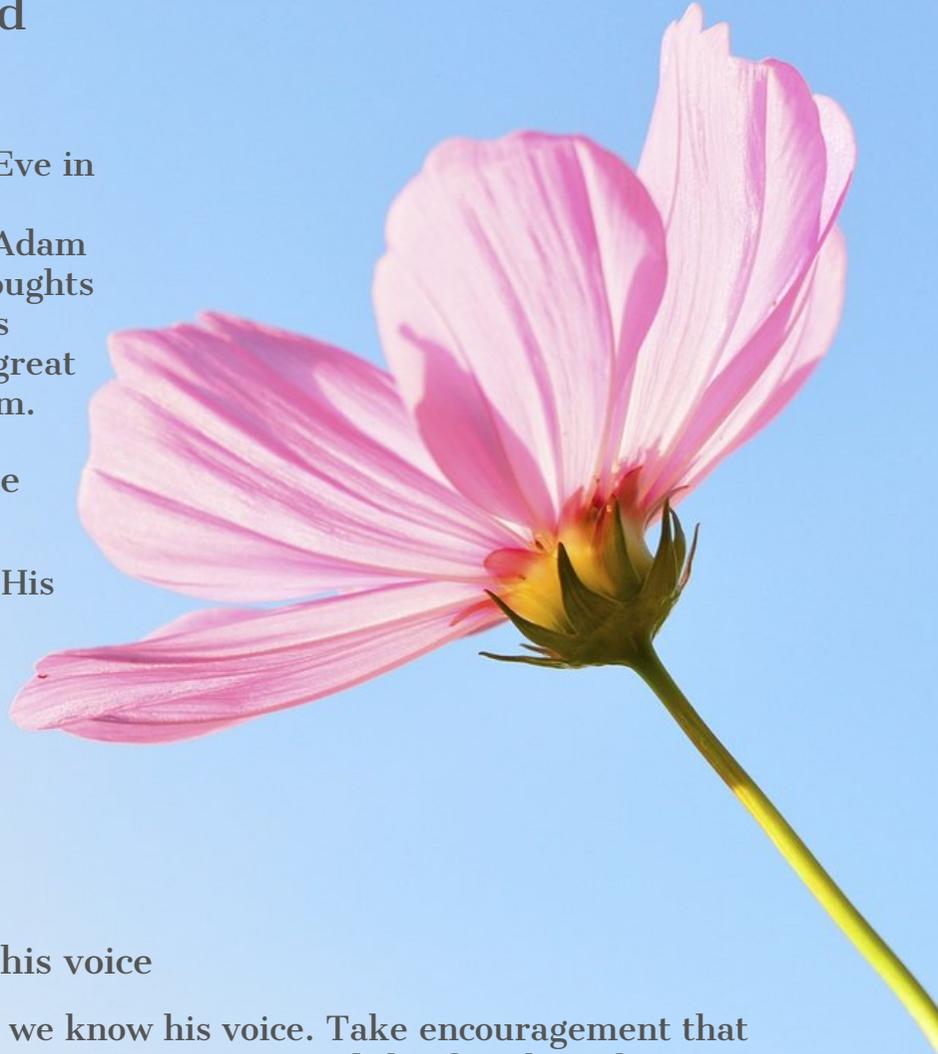
They were in conversation constantly. God even asked Adam to name the animals! God was interested in Adam's thoughts and perspectives, he was interested in his creativity, his opinion and he wanted Adam's involvement. God took great pleasure in being in relationship and working with Adam.

Genesis 1:27 & John 14 - made in his image with the Father's heart to relate

Never doubt that God speaks to you. He created you in His image to be in conversation with Him. We know this because Jesus came and showed us what the Father is like. Jesus loved to be in relationship with others - he spent time talking to others, engaging with them. This is who our God is - a relational God who loves to converse with us. John 14:6 says "From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

John 10:27 - We have the ability to know and hear his voice

Jesus made it clear that he knows us, we know him and we know his voice. Take encouragement that you know his voice, even when you think you are not hearing, Jesus promised that his sheep listen to his voice and follow him. Keep on taking time to read the word, talking to God and stop to listen. He speaks!



HEARING GOD'S VOICE

Saved because God speaks - God calls us and invites us in!

Relationship with His creation is the core of the Father's heart

All the things that God created are an expression of his love. God created people out of love and for his delight. We know that from the very moment relationship was broken in the garden, when Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree, God began his work to restore relationship with His creation. When Adam and Eve realised what they had done, they tried to hide from God, because they were scared. What did God do? Look at Genesis 3:9.

"But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" Genesis 3:9.

Notice that God called out to them. He didn't want them to hide, but he had to deal with sin.

God has been pursuing his people ever since. All through the Old Testament we see God calling his people back to him. He loves us and it is heart that we are reconciled back to right relationship with him.

God initiates salvation - John 3:16-17

Undoubtedly, John 3:16 is one of the most famous and well known passages of scripture ever. Take a moment to read John 3:16 and 17 - try to read it as though you've never read or heard it before. What do you notice?

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. John 3:16-17

God loved. God gave. God invites all. God saves.

Our salvation is at His invitation - Follow me!

Have a look at Matthew 4:18-22, Matthew 9:9 and Mark 10:17-22. What did Jesus say to all of these people?

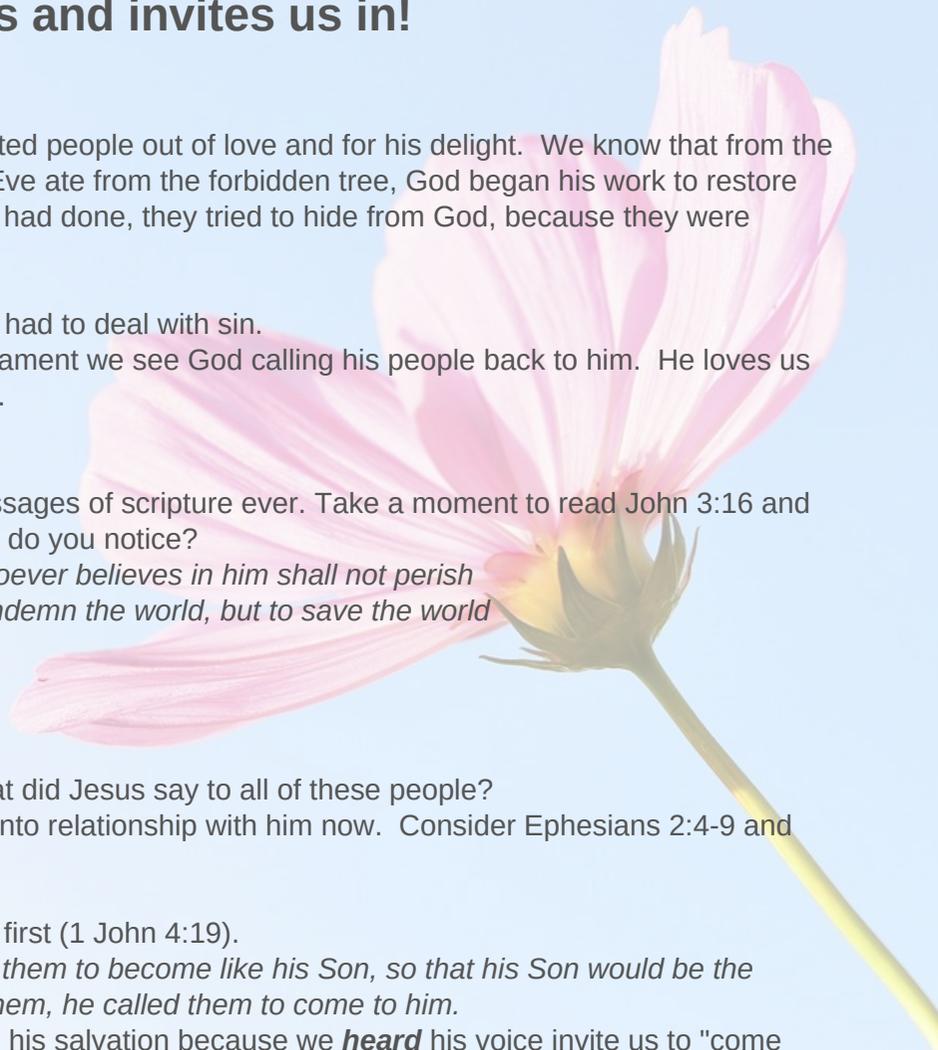
Jesus invited people to follow Him then, He continues to invite people into relationship with him now. Consider Ephesians 2:4-9 and 2 Peter 1:3. What do they say about our salvation?

God initiated our salvation. He called us by his own voice. He loved us first (1 John 4:19).

Romans 8:29-30 *For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn[n] among many brothers and sisters. 30 And having chosen them, he called them to come to him.*

It is his voice that calls us into relationship - we can only have received his salvation because we **heard** his voice invite us to "come follow me".

Reflect on your own salvation - what did His voice "sound" like?



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Never without His voice

Never alone, therefore never without His voice

As believers, we live with an absolute assurance that we are never alone, the Holy Spirit in us always. It is the presence of Holy Spirit in us that means we are never without His voice. Our job is to tune our heart to hear what He is saying to us.

Scripture references:

"...and surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:20

There are many scriptures that tell us God never leaves us, you can read some of them in Deuteronomy 31:6, Joshua 1:9 and Psalm 46:7

Action: Take some time to read through Deuteronomy 31:1-6 and Joshua 1 to understand the context of God's promise to his people.

Hearing = speaking + listening + the word

Speaking and Listening - Relationships are two way.

God is all about relationship - he wants us to know Him, He's not hiding from us, He's waiting for us to lean in and talk to him. Just like relationships with people, when we talk, they talk back (generally!) and they expect that we are listening to their response. Same with God, when we talk to Him, we need to listen for His response, we need to tune in to His voice.

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Luke 8:8

We need to trust that he speaks, that he has a redemptive solution for every problem and that he has a promise that will guide us through each and every situation we encounter.

Luke 24:32 - Our hearts burn while he talks to us! The hearts of the disciples burned - this is an innate sense that we can learn to recognise

The Word - Hear God's voice as you read the Bible

God speaks through His word. If you want to hear God speak, read your Bible. If we read with expectancy, seeking to hear from God - when God is speaking, the word will come alive to you.

Read Luke 24:45 - Jesus opened the minds of the disciples so they could understand the scriptures. He will do the same for us now as He did for the disciples. You may find that different passages of scripture stand out more at different times, this is a clue that God might be speaking to you on a particular matter or issue.

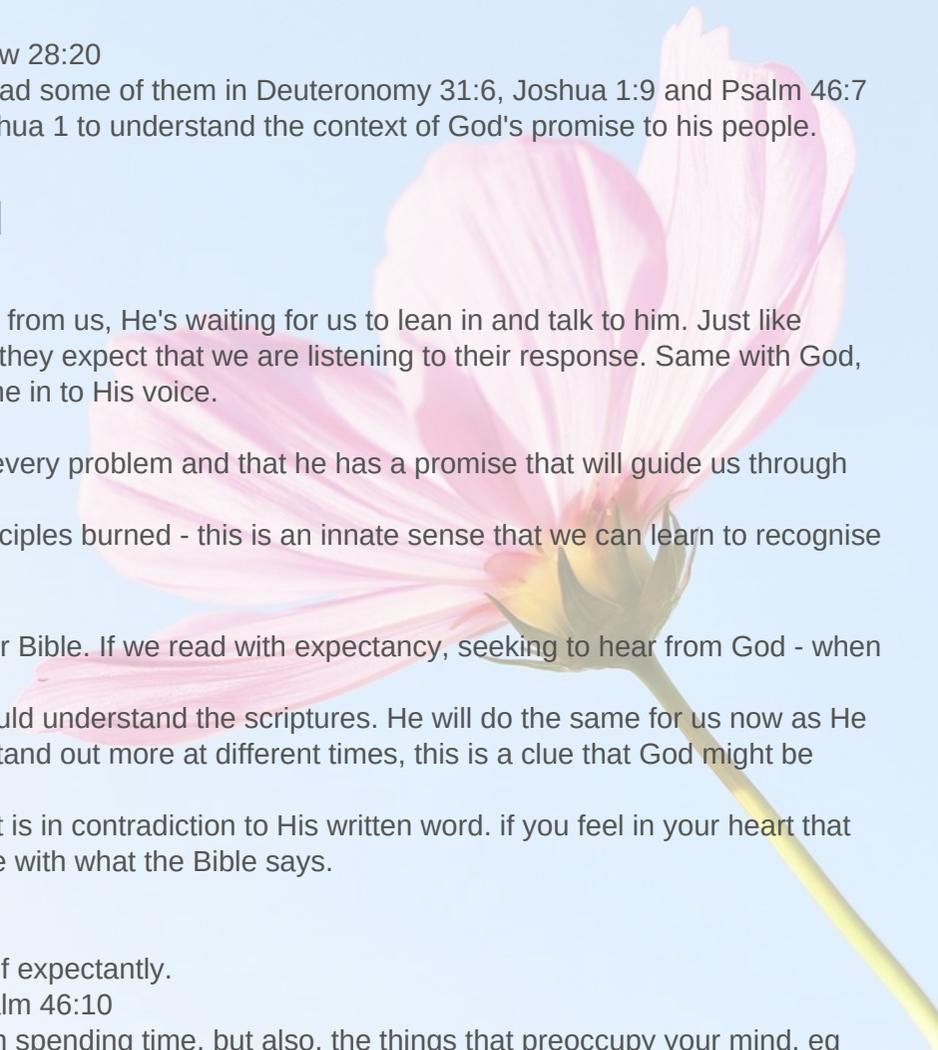
Scripture is also a checkpoint - God will never speak anything to us that is in contradiction to His written word. If you feel in your heart that God has spoken something to you, you can check to see that it is in line with what the Bible says.

Practical tips to hear God's voice:

- Be receptive, eager, willing to listen, ready to hear - posture yourself expectantly.
- Make time every day to talk to God and listen for His response. Psalm 46:10
- Remove distractions. Deal with anything that is distracting you from spending time, but also, the things that preoccupy your mind, eg worries, burdens, lies, activities you are planning
- When you seek to hear from God, be ready to obey, whatever it is he is asking you to do! Align your prayers with His heart.

Action:

1. Do you have any distractions to quiet time with God? Write them down, deal with them now, check back on this list regularly.
2. Write down what God is saying to you each day as you pray and read the Bible.
3. Obey - do what He's asking you to do!



HEARING GOD'S VOICE

Creative God - Creative dialogue

God speaks to us in different ways. When considering how God speaks to us, frame your thinking around these principles:

- God is God - there are no limits on what he can do and how he does it, including how he talks to his people.
- Jesus reassures us that His sheep know His voice and they follow Him (John 10:27)
- God's conversation with us will never contradict what is written in the Bible.

The ways God speaks:

1) Bible - this is God's word for all people. He speaks through his written word, it is timeless and unchanging yet absolutely relevant for all aspects of life.

2) Prayer and the still small voice - Prayer is critical to knowing God's voice and hearing what he is saying to us. The still small voice is the voice that we just know. You can read about Elijah's encounter in 1 Kings 19:11-13. The more we talk to God and listen for His response, the more familiar we become with His voice. (My sheep know me. John 10:27)

3) Creation - God spoke the world into being. Note - when God speaks, He creates. His creation is incredible, awesome, intricate, purposeful etc etc etc! There are not enough words to describe how amazing His creation is! God speaks through His creation - the sheer beauty and wonder of what we see in nature points us to God - the Master Designer and creator of all things. Consider even the seasons and how each serves its purpose. Consider the size of mountains and glacier, the stars, moon and sun. Incredible! Romans 1:20

4) Dreams and visions. God spoke to many people in the Bible through dreams. Consider Matthew 1:20-23 and 2:13-23 where God spoke to Joseph in his dreams, through an angel. Consider the prophet Daniel, God revealed his entire plan to Daniel in dreams and visions. Consider Acts 16:6-10 - Paul has a dream of where to go.

5) Through others - it could be the preached word, a conversation, a worship song, any encounter/transaction with another.

ACTION - Write down other ways that God speaks. Write down the ways God has spoken to you - how has this played out in your life?

Can you think of any "quirky" or unusual ways that God spoke in the Bible?

