

**Growing
in
Hearing God**

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Note: If you have a mentor, you may want to ask them to help you process this checklist. If you don't have a mentor, you might want to ask God to help you find one. A mentor who hears God can be very helpful to your spiritual growth process.

I. Understanding – Biblical and Experiential

A. Biblical

1. Do you believe that God speaks to His children?
(See *John 10:1-30*.)
2. Are you one of His children?
3. Do you believe that God wants to speak to *you* in ways you can understand? If not, why not?

B. Experiential

1. Are you aware of the various ways God speaks to His children?

They include:

- God speaking to us through scripture – generally or specifically
- God speaking to us through nature
- God speaking to us through people
- God reminding us of something or pointing out its significance
- Holy Spirit inspired:
 - Impressions
 - Thoughts
 - Insights
 - Creative ideas
- God orchestrating occurrences in our lives
- A sense of “release and peace”¹
- Dreams and visions
- God speaking to us in an audible voice
- Miraculous occurrences
- Other ways God speaks to us

¹ Term from *Positioning for Power*, by Stuart Robinson, ©1998 Stuart Robinson.

2. How have you experienced God speaking to you in the past (if you have)? Give one to five significant examples.
3. Would you like God to speak to you more? If so, ask Him to help you grow in hearing His voice.

II. Hindrances to Hearing God’s Voice and ‘The Way Out’

A. Hindrances Related to Biblical Understanding.

1. Not believing that God speaks to His children.

If you don’t believe that God speaks to His children, the way out is to work through this theological issue.

2. Not knowing that you are His child.

a. If you’ve never asked God to forgive you and make you one of His children, the way out is through doing so. This involves trusting your whole life to Him, and living in submission to Him.

b. If you’ve asked God to forgive you and make you one of His children, but you’re uncertain that you *are* one of His children, the way out is through working through the reasons for your uncertainty.

3. Not believing that God wants to speak to you.

If you believe that God speaks to His children, and you know that you’re God’s child, but you’re not sure that God would want to speak to *you*, the way out is through working through the reasons for your uncertainty.

B. Hindrances Related to Your Concept of God

1. When the “god” Your Parents Showed You Is Not the True God. How children learn to view God is generally directly related to how their parents revealed Him to them through their interactions. For example, if a parent was cruel to a child, that child learns to view God as cruel. This correlation is strongest for the more dominant parent in the marriage relationship (the one who was the concrete referent of “god” that the child saw in the family system).

Our faulty views of God can be changed. A first significant step in this process is becoming aware of how you view God, and how your view may have been shaped by your parents. Working through the following may help you understand how you tend to view God:

- List three to five adjectives that describe your father’s interaction with you when you were a child. Examples: compassionate, understanding, distant, cold, harsh, cruel, kind, gentle, dismissing.
- List three to five adjectives that describe your mother’s interaction with you when you were a child. Examples: compassionate, understanding, distant, cold, harsh, cruel, kind, gentle, dismissing.
- List three to five adjectives that describe how you experientially view God (not logically, but purely at a feeling level). Examples: compassionate, understanding, distant, cold, harsh, cruel, kind, gentle, dismissing.
- What, if any, correlations do you see between how you view your father and/or mother’s interaction with you, and how you experientially view God?

- What does this tell you about how accurate your concept of God may be?
- To what extent does scripture confirm your experiential concept of God, and to what extent is your experiential view different from scripture?
- If your view of God differs from how scripture portrays Him, would you like to ask God to change your experiential view so that you can truly “see Him” as He is? If so, ask Him to do this.

Additional steps toward developing an accurate concept of God include:

- Ask God to help you *separate* your understanding of each of your parent’s character and how they interacted with you *from* who God truly is and how He truly interacts with His children.
- Ask God to help you see more clearly who God truly is and how He interacts with His children.
- Work through any root issues that hinder you from having an accurate concept of God.
- Grow in relating to God as He truly is, including communicating with Him as He intends (and ask God to help you keep growing in this).

2. Abuse and Trauma. If you have been abused in some way (spiritually, emotionally, physically, sexually, etc.) or experienced another significant type of trauma, this can drastically affect your view of God. Ask God to help you find someone who can assist you in working through these issues and how they’ve impacted your concept of God, others, and yourself.

3. Other Hindrances to Viewing God as He is.

Ask God to reveal any other hindrances to you seeing God as He is. An example would be not wanting to know who God *really* is (because then you'd need to change). Work through any related root issues.

C. Hindrances Related to Your Concept of Self

1. How You Think God Views You. Working through the following may help you identify how you think God views you, and overcome any related hindrances to hearing God:

- List three to five adjectives that describe how you think God views you. Examples: holy, blameless, accepted, unlovable, unforgivable, worthless.
- Do you think God *really* loves you? If so, how much? If not, why not?
- Do you think God *fully* accepts you? Why or why not?
- Do you think God *wants* to communicate with you? Why or why not?
- Do you *really* want to hear Him? Why or why not?
- Summarize how you think God views you.
- Work through any issues above and any related root issues.²

² To learn more about who you are in Christ, see <http://www.ficm.org/newsite/index.php?command=textwhoamiinchrist> and Module 12, Attachment 2 of Out of Darkness into Light, Wholeness Prayer Basic Modules, Standard Version (listed in resource information following).

2. How You View Yourself. Working through the following may help you identify how you view yourself, and overcome any related hindrances to hearing God:

- List three to five adjectives that describe you view yourself. Examples: holy, blameless, accepted, unlovable, unforgivable, worthless.
- Do you love yourself? If not, why not?
- Do you accept yourself? If not, why not?
- Do you think anyone would *really want* to communicate with you? Why or why not?
- Summarize how you view yourself.
- Work through any issues above and any related root issues.

D. Other Hindrances to Hearing God.

1. Anger, Bitterness, Rage, Desire for Revenge, and/or a Critical Spirit. The way out is through repentance and surrender (and working through related root issues).

2. Fear, Anxiety, Doubt. The way out is through trust and surrender (and working through related root issues).

3. Unforgiveness. The way out is through forgiving from the heart (and working through related root issues).

4. Unconfessed Sin. The way out is through repentance (and working through related root issues).

5. An Unsurrendered Heart and/or Unsurrendered Outcomes. The way out is through trust and surrender (and working through related root issues).

6. A Focus on Self and/or Self-Protection. This is often related to issues of trust. When we're focused on self or self-protection we tend to only have our ears open to hear the answer we want to hear. This self-focus makes it hard to hear anything at all, except our own voice. The way out is through focusing outward: loving God and others.

7. Vows and Decisions. A few examples are: Don't talk, think, feel, listen, trust, need, want, and/or desire. The way out is to get God's perspective and agree with it (which is facilitated by working through root issues).

8. Feeling that asking God to speak to you is unrealistic or unwise for some reason. Reasons might include: You find it hard to trust God fully. You're afraid that asking God to speak to you could lead to disappointment or punishment. You feel that God is distant, uncaring, or harsh. The way out involves working through *why* you feel that asking God to speak to you is unrealistic or unwise (including working through related root issues).

9. View of Relationships. Some questions you could ask yourself are: "What do you generally expect from relationships?" "Do you expect relationships to bring joy or pain?" "Or do you expect something else from relationships, such as disappointment, conflict, satisfaction, ...?" If you expect negative things from relationships, the way out involves working through root issues, and asking God to help you develop healthy relationships, with Him and with others.

10. Busy-ness. It's hard to hear God when we don't take the time to listen to Him. The way out involves deciding to set aside significant time to hear God's voice (and working through any related underlying reasons, such as being afraid to be still or being afraid of intimacy).

11. A Lack of Patience. Sometimes we give up too soon. The way out is to persevere.

12. Not *Really* Wanting to Hear What God Has to Say. The way out involves working through any root issues (such as not wanting to change, fear of intimacy, issues with trust, and/or considering something or someone else more important than God).

13. Not Knowing How to Listen. The way out involves learning how to listen and working through related root issues.

Steps in learning to listen to others include:

- Caring about what they have to say
- Encouraging them to share with you
- Taking the time to listen to what they have to say
- Reflecting back to them what you think they said and getting their feedback
- Refining your listening skills so that you can more accurately hear what they are saying.

Steps in learning to listen to God include:

- Caring about what He has to say
- Asking Him to speak to you
- Taking time to listen to what He has to say (including growing in your knowledge of God's Word, and learning to be still)

- Reflecting back to God what you think He's saying and asking Him to help you discern whether or not that's really what He's saying
- Refining your listening skills so that you can more accurately hear what God is saying.

14. Not Obeying Something God Already Said. If God has already spoken to you and you haven't obeyed His voice, the way out is to obey. If it's too late to obey what He told you previously, ask His forgiveness, and ask Him to show you what (if any) steps He'd like you to take *now* related to that issue.

15. Other Hindrances. Ask God to reveal to you anything that is hindering you from hearing Him clearly – through any way He chooses. If you don't want to pray in this way, the reason *why* is probably one of the hindrances to you hearing God. The way out involves working through any hindrances God reveals.

III. Practical Steps for Growing in Hearing God and Overcoming any Hindrances.

A. Ask God to Help You. Ask Him:

- To help you grow in hearing His voice
- To help you hear His every whisper.

B. Seek to Overcome any Hindrances. Ask God:

- To help you fully trust Him, surrender to Him, and obey Him
- To show you any hindrances you have to hearing His voice.
- To overcome any hindrances you have to hearing His voice.

- To show you practical ways to overcome these hindrances. (You may want to ask a mentor to help you with this. If there are many potential hindrances, you may also want to ask a mentor to help you discern which hindrances to focus on overcoming *first*, and which to focus more on *later*.)

C. Practice Hearing God's Voice.

- Set aside regular times to listen to God.
- Ask God to speak to you throughout your day – in whatever ways He chooses – and to help you to hear all that He's speaking to you.

D. Test and Evaluate.

- Test what you hear to make sure it's consistent with God's Word.
- Evaluate whether or not what you heard is really God speaking.
- Get the perspective of someone who is spiritually mature and has good discernment.
- Continue growing in discernment and in learning to hear God's voice.
- Continue to *ask, seek, practice, test* and *evaluate*.

E. Other Action Steps:

- Periodically evaluate your progress.
- Celebrate your successes.
- Through studying God's word:
 - Learn more about who God *really* is
 - Learn more about how much God *really* loves you
 - Learn more about how often God wants to speak to you. (God is always speaking to us, but we don't always hear Him. He's put His Holy Spirit, who loves to communicate with

us, in our hearts. God wants us to grow in hearing His voice.)

- Learn more about God’s ways and perspective.
- Rejoice that God wants to communicate with you, and that through His power He is fully able to help you grow in hearing His voice. ***“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Ephesians 1:18-23). To Him be the glory!***

IV. Resources for Further Study.

A. *Positioning for Power*, by Stuart Robinson, ©1998 by Stuart Robinson. Published by Sovereign World Ltd.

B. *Hearing God*, by Dallas Willard, ©1984,1993,1999 by Dallas Willard. Published by IVP.

C. *Out of Darkness into Light, Wholeness Prayer Basic Modules, Standard Version* ©2004,2005 by Freedom for the Captives Ministries. May be downloaded (for non-commercial use) from this website.

D. *Sharpening Your Interpersonal Skills*, by Ken Williams, Ph.D., ©2002 by International Training Partners.

