

The Practice of Listening & Obeying

Jesus speaks to us in a variety of ways, through the Holy Spirit. And yet, how often do we take the time to pause and listen? We'd love to invite everyone to be intentional this summer with the spiritual practice of listening and obeying.

Listen

To listen is to open our hearts to hear from the Lord. It likely won't come in a large audible voice, it often comes in one of the following forms:

- A gentle or "still small" voice - Usually a thought or whisper that comes to our minds.
- Impressions in our spirit – An impression can be like a small tug on your heart which is usually compelling us toward something.
- Pictures/Visions – These can be in the form of a picture or some sort of scene that plays out in our mind.

While listening, ask yourself the question, "**What is God saying to me?**" Then pay attention to what pops into your mind. For example:

- Are there certain people that come to mind?
- Are you feeling drawn toward a particular action?
- Is there a word or phrase that is jumping out at you?
- Is there a particular tug at your heart?
- Any images coming to mind?

The more we practice listening, the more we will become familiar with God's voice!

Obey

To obey is to respond by putting into practice whatever the Holy Spirit prompts us to do. Listening without obeying is useless. Obeying requires us to pause and ask, "**What am I going to do about what God is saying to me?**" and then following through with what God is prompting. Pay attention to what pops into your mind when you ask the question. For example:

- Is there someone I need to text?
- Is there a word of encouragement I need to give?
- Is there someone I need to forgive?
- Is there a next step in my spiritual journey that I need to take?
- Is there a financial commitment I am supposed to make?
- Is there someone I need to help? Or a ministry I need to join?

On following page, you will find some common methods (although certainly not exhaustive) the Holy Spirit can use to speak to us. As you spend time in the following areas, let's practice together listening for God's voice and responding in obedience.

5 Common Ways the Holy Spirit Speaks

1. Through Scripture

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. (Psalm 119:105)

As you read Scripture, take time to pause and listen by asking:

- What is God saying to me? (PAUSE & LISTEN)
- What am I going to do about it? (RESPOND & OBEY)

2. Through Prayer

We may not know how to pray, but Scripture tells us the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us. (Romans 8:26-27)

As you spend time in prayer, take time to pause and listen by asking:

- What is God saying to me? (PAUSE & LISTEN)
- What am I going to do about it? (RESPOND & OBEY)

3. Through People

The Holy Spirit often speaks to us using other people. As you spend time either with friends, reading a book, or listening to a teaching, sermon, or song, take time to pause and listen by asking:

- What is God saying to me? (PAUSE & LISTEN)
- What am I going to do about it? (RESPOND & OBEY)

4. Through Creation

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. (Psalm 19:1-2)

As you spend time in nature, whether taking a walk, sitting in a peaceful spot, or enjoying a favorite outdoor activity, take time to pause and listen by asking:

- What is God saying to me in this moment? (PAUSE & LISTEN)
- What am I going to do about it? (RESPOND & OBEY)

5. Through Circumstances (past & present)

The Holy Spirit speaks to us through circumstances in our lives, especially difficult ones. Not every open or closed opportunity is necessarily God trying to speak to you, but as we listen for God's voice, we can better understand what God might be trying to communicate through whatever we are going through.

As you encounter circumstances in your daily life, take time to pause and listen by asking:

- What is God saying to me? (PAUSE & LISTEN)
- What am I going to do about it? (RESPOND & OBEY)