

HEARING GOD'S

*Voice*

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HIS NATURE IS TO SPEAK.  
YOU WERE CREATED TO HEAR.

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# WEEK ONE | *Created to Hear*

## Overview

In **John 10:27** Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me.” Our focus in this class will be to grow in hearing God’s voice **personally**.

By “hearing” we mean developing the knowledge, sensitivity, and skill to discern the will of God from all the ways He enjoys communicating. How can we cultivate our hearts with truth and practical skills that remove barriers, increase our sensitivity, and open the pipeline between us and God to know what He’s saying about our own life? This class will increase the two-way conversation between you and God, and you will gain confidence in your ability to hear Him and know what to do when you hear Him.



## Hearing Assessment #1

1. If you had to rank your confidence in hearing God’s voice on a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being the lowest and least confident and 10 being the highest and most confident, how would you rank your ability to hear? Circle one.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

2. How often do you expect or need to hear God speak to you? What frequency seems about right?

Constantly     Hourly     Daily     Once a week     Once a month  
 Once a year     Rarely     I’ve never heard God’s voice

3. Now think back over this past week. How often did you take time to listen for His voice or ask God a question and expect a response?

Constantly     Hourly     Daily     Maybe once     Didn’t happen

4. Is it easier for you to hear God for other people or for your own life?

I tend to hear more personally, for my own life     I tend to hear more for other people



5. When you hear God's voice or get a sense of what He's saying to you, what does it typically sound or feel like? Which word BEST describes it?

- Simple     Heavy     Joyful     Unemotional     Demanding  
 Loving     Serious     Stern     Confusing     Encouraging



## GOING DEEPER

1. **John 1:1-5** *In the beginning was the **Word**, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things **came into being** through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was **life**, and the life was the **Light** of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

- Since Jesus is called “the Word,” we know He loves to \_\_\_\_\_.
- The 3 activities of Jesus as the Word look like: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

“His nature is to speak. You were created to hear.”

2. Hearing God's voice is a fundamental heart posture and life habit that brings direction and fruitfulness in life, leadership, and ministry as well as sustainability over many years.

- **Mark 1:35** *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. **Luke 5:15-16** But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus Himself would **often slip away to the wilderness and pray.***
- **Acts 16:9-10** *A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.*
- **Deuteronomy 8:2-3** *You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years...He humbled you and let you*

be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that **proceeds** out of the mouth of the Lord.

- **Matthew 4:3-4** *And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that **proceeds** out of the mouth of God.'"*

**"proceeds"** - Hebrew is *mowtsa'* meaning "to issue/spring forth, watersprings." Greek is *ekporeuomai* meaning "to go out, flow forth."

3. How often did David need to hear God's voice? \_\_\_\_\_

- **Psalms 119:147** *I rise before the dawning of the morning and cry for help; I hope in Your word.*

4. The words from God's mouth are life-giving bread and water. If you're not hearing His voice, you're \_\_\_\_\_.

5. The quality of your life and success in the Kingdom of God depends on how often you hear God and what you do when He speaks.

What is the last thing God said to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you obey fully? \_\_\_\_\_

6. All of life operates by the principle of seed, and all seeds have DNA inside of them. If creation operates this way, what does that tell us about every single word God speaks? How is it different than when we speak?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Mark 4:20** *But these (seeds of God's Word) are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.*

**Luke 24:32** *And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"*

 **LET'S PRACTICE**

Many believers don't ask God specific, thoughtful questions. We want you to develop this critical skill in your relationship with God...asking good questions. Let's practice!

1. What is one question about your past, one question about your present, and one question concerning your future, that if you knew the answers to, it would change your life? (If you're stuck, ask Him to show you good questions to ask!)

- One question I have about my past: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- One question I have about my present: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- One question I have about my future: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How you see God determines how you hear Him or how you interpret what you hear from Him. Listen to the instructions and then write your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. In every season of life, the Father wants to help us learn the value of His Word and the importance of our obedience.

- What kind of season do you feel like you're in?

- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm in a delay or waiting season.                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> This is a dry season. I don't feel much.                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm in a season of being healed from some old hurts. | <input type="checkbox"/> This is a season of relationships being restored.                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> God is actively preparing me right now for something very specific. | <input type="checkbox"/> This is a very fruitful season. I'm pouring out a lot and need strength. | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm feeling overwhelmed and don't know what to do?   | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm in a season of needing wisdom to pour legacy into others who can lead. |

- Now take a few minutes to explain to the Father what kind of season you feel you're in and then ask Him 1 or 2 questions about it. Here are some examples:
  - What do you want me to understand about You during this season?
  - Am I believing a lie in this season because of assumptions about You?
  - Am I believing a lie because of feelings about myself or my circumstances?
  - What do you want to accomplish *in me* during this season?"
  - Is there a way I could be operating or thinking differently that would make this season more effective or more enjoyable?
  - Is there something I'm doing, saying or thinking that is making this season longer or harder than it should be?

- What did you hear or sense? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## WEEK TWO | *Ways God Speaks*



### Hearing Assessment #2

1. What are some ways God currently speaks to you? Check the ones that apply.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Revelation when I read the Bible | <input type="checkbox"/> Dreams                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Still, small voice on the inside | <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Pictures/Visions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Words of Knowledge      | <input type="checkbox"/> Audible Words             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Impressions              | <input type="checkbox"/> Open Visions              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Words like text in my mind       | <input type="checkbox"/> Trances                   |

2. In the past were you ever taught that God doesn't speak directly to His people anymore except through the Bible?

- YES                       NO

3. Do you tend to hear or sense general things from God, or do you hear very specific direction and very specific words for your life (specific enough that you can write them down and obey or watch them happen)?

- I hear/sense generally                       I hear/sense specific words                       Somewhere in the middle

4. When you have difficulty hearing God's voice, what would you say is the main reason?

- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daily distractions   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pressures & expectations of people | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of confidence          | <input type="checkbox"/> God feels distant or uninvolved                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure how to distinguish between myself and God's voice | <input type="checkbox"/> Feelings of unworthiness           | <input type="checkbox"/> Striving or overthinking it | <input type="checkbox"/> Expecting an "inner voice" that doesn't happen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This is totally foreign to me                              |   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Unfamiliar with ways God speaks                |





## **GOING DEEPER: Ways God Speaks**

### 1. The Bible

- **2 Timothy 3:15-17** *...from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

- The Bible is God's primary agency to reveal the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and to equip God's people through teaching, \_\_\_\_\_, correcting, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Bible is God's \_\_\_\_\_ for all revelation.

### 2. Visions | Seeing While Awake

<i>Inner Vision</i>	<i>Open Vision</i>	<i>Trance</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- most common</li> <li>- natural senses <i>not</i> suspended</li> <li>- seeing with the eyes of your heart in the inner man</li> <li>- image or movie flashes across consciousness</li> <li>- <b>2 Kings 5:26</b> discerning of spirits in a word of knowledge expressed in a vision</li> <li>- Sense of urgency doesn't indicate timing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- less common</li> <li>- natural senses <i>not</i> suspended</li> <li>- what is revealed shown like on a screen</li> <li>- greater level of detail and more objective</li> <li>- seeing in the natural and spirit-realm at the same time</li> <li>- Angels seen in relation to the physical surroundings</li> <li>- <b>2 Kings 8:11-13</b> (Elisha and Hazael, future king of Syria)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- least common</li> <li>- natural senses suspended</li> <li>- physical surroundings disappear w/ full consciousness of the spirit-realm</li> <li>- Angels seen in relation to the spirit-realm</li> <li>- <b>2 Cor 12:1-4</b></li> <li>- <b>Acts 10:11-15</b></li> <li>- used when accuracy and urgency are more important</li> <li>- Grk <i>exstasei</i>: "a throwing of the mind out of its normal state; amazement"</li> </ul>

### 3. **Dreams** | Seeing While Asleep

- Warning Dreams - God warns of physical harm, dangerous or deceptive people, wrong decisions, blindspots of sin that keep us out of the will of God, and many other things.

**Job 33:14-18** *For God does speak...in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, He may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride...*

**Matthew 2:12-13** *And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt..."*

- Direction Dreams - God reveals locational, career, or relational directives as well as information about major decisions. Important to understand biblical types and conventions and ask God about the interpretation and timing. (see *Dream Journal* below)

**Acts 16:9-10** *During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.*

- Prophetic Insight - God gives supernatural wisdom and revelation related to important relationships or events in our lives.

**Genesis 41** - Pharaoh's dream of 7 yrs of abundance and 7 yrs of famine.

**Genesis 28** - Jacob's dream at Bethel and God repeats His promise to Abraham.

#### **Tips for Dream Interpretation**

- Most dreams are personal for insight, encouragement, confirmation, warning or clarity.
- Never interpret dreams through fear.
- Dreams about other people should produce intercession for more insight and direction. Always ask the Father about purpose and timing when sharing your dream with another person.
- We typically dream on the level of our authority or influence.  
(*EXAMPLE: Joseph's boyhood dreams involved himself and his family, whereas Pharaoh's dreams were prophetic direction to protect an entire nation.*)

- Dreams are an invitation to relationship, not just riddles to solve. For a Spirit-filled believer, running to other people or the internet to interpret dreams is dangerous short-term and hinders our growth long-term.
- Sometimes another type of communication is used within a dream, like an audible word or an angelic visitation.
- Stewardship is the key to more. If you want to increase in frequency of dreams and understanding about dreams, write them down and pray about them. (see *Dream Journal* below)

#### 4. **Words of Knowledge, Wisdom and Prophecy**

- Divinely inspired information, solutions or concepts you suddenly know that you didn't learn naturally or didn't pre-think to say.

##### **1 Corinthians 12:8-10**

**Acts 5:3** *Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?"*

- The Holy Spirit will usually join a word of knowledge with a word of wisdom or a prophetic word in order to make it helpful/effective.
- Discerning of spirits is different in that it's knowing what spirit is in operation or motivating someone, whether the Holy Spirit, an evil spirit, or someone's human spirit/soul.

#### 5. **Hearing Words & Impressions**

- Audible Words - a word from God you hear with your natural ears as if it were spoken by another person in the room.

**1 Samuel 3:2-5** *It happened at that time as...Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was, that the Lord called Samuel; and he said, "Here I am." Then he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, lie down again." So he went and lay down.*

- Internal Audible Words - a word from God that is not heard by your natural ears but is internally loud and clear, as if it were spoken on the inside from an internal voice not your own. This comes with unforgettable word-for-word clarity that can be written down and repeated to others with absolute confidence.

**1 Kings 19:12-13** *After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"*

## 6. Internal whisper or “bubbling up” of words/phrases

- General sense or impression based on multiple factors. This usually comes along with peace and confidence because of confirmation from Scripture and other godly people.

**Acts 15:19-20, 28** *Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, <sup>20</sup>but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. <sup>28</sup>“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials...”*



## DISCERNING “WHAT” & “HOW” GOD IS SPEAKING

### 1. DISCERNING **WHAT** HE IS SAYING (Truth)

- Knowing who God is and discerning His character determines *what* you hear from the Holy Spirit when He speaks. This means what you believe about His nature and what you’ve been taught becomes the filter through which you hear.
- Your beliefs will determine *what* you hear when He speaks.

**John 11:17-27** *On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”*

### 2. DISCERNING **HOW** HE IS SAYING IT (Tone of Voice)

- Knowing how God feels about you determines the *tone* you hear when He speaks.
- This means what you believe about His heart towards you becomes the filter through which you sense His tone of voice.

**John 4:15-18** *The woman \*said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw.” He said to her, “Go, call your husband and come here.” The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.”*

*Jesus said to her, "You have correctly said, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."*

 **LET'S PRACTICE**

Many believers don't ask God specific, thoughtful questions. We want you to develop this critical skill in your relationship with God...asking good questions. Let's practice!

1. Father, what's one **encouraging** thing you want to say to me about my \_\_\_\_\_ regarding my \_\_\_\_\_?  
(attitude/timing/work ethic/character) (family/work/school/marriage/ministry)

2. What do You want to **correct** about my \_\_\_\_\_  
(attitude/timing/work ethic/character)  
 regarding my \_\_\_\_\_?  
(family/work/school/marriage/ministry)

3. Describe the most recent incident where someone hurt or wronged you (even if in a minor way or not intentionally) and it was offensive, causing some level of bitterness or ongoing hurt:

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4. Now, ask the Father 3 questions about the situation and write down His response or the general impression/picture you get after you ask.

- Father, how do you see the person who hurt/wronged me?  


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- Father, how do you feel about them?  


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- Father, what do you want me to learn from this situation? How can I grow as a result of this happening? (Romans 8:28 mindset)

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# DREAM JOURNAL

**Title:**

**Date:**

**Time:**

AM  
PM

Main Theme	Point of View	Summary w/Key Words
<input type="checkbox"/> Warning <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict / Warfare <input type="checkbox"/> Encounter <input type="checkbox"/> Relational <input type="checkbox"/> Corrective <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:	<input type="checkbox"/> 1st Person (happend to me) <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Person (watched it) <input type="checkbox"/> Ground level <input type="checkbox"/> Airborne <input type="checkbox"/> High on a Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Stable/Safe <input type="checkbox"/> Precarious/Unsafe	What happened and what were the key words, phrases, scriptures, or thoughts that really stuck out to you?
Colors, Numbers, Clarity	People, Places, Animals	Emotions
<input type="checkbox"/> Black & White <input type="checkbox"/> Full Color  Colors that stood out? <input type="checkbox"/> Red / Orange <input type="checkbox"/> Blue / Green <input type="checkbox"/> Black / White <input type="checkbox"/> Purple / Gold <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:  <input type="checkbox"/> Foggy / Unclear / Forgettable <input type="checkbox"/> Clear / Crisp / Memorable <input type="checkbox"/> Caused terror / confusion <input type="checkbox"/> Caused urgency / desire to pray	<b>PEOPLE:</b> Key Name(s): Meaning(s): What does this person/people represent in your life?  <b>ANIMALS:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Unclean / Predatory <input type="checkbox"/> Clean / Non-Predatory Made me feel... <input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe / Fearful <input type="checkbox"/> Uncomfortable <input type="checkbox"/> Safe <input type="checkbox"/> Happy / Good  <input type="checkbox"/> 1st / 2nd / 3rd Floor <input type="checkbox"/> Front / Back Yard <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen / Living Rm / Bdrm <input type="checkbox"/> Inside / Outside	How did this dream make you feel? <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraged <input type="checkbox"/> Fearful <input type="checkbox"/> Loved <input type="checkbox"/> Inspired <input type="checkbox"/> Terrified <input type="checkbox"/> Ashamed <input type="checkbox"/> Joyful / Excited <input type="checkbox"/> Hopeful <input type="checkbox"/> Warned / Prepared <input type="checkbox"/> Informed / Instructed <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
Initial Interpretation	My Influence/Authority	Points for Prayer
What do you think your dream means generally?	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Word <input type="checkbox"/> For another person <input type="checkbox"/> For a group of people  What would the dream mean if interpreted according to my realm of influence? (E.g., If I'm a dad & business owner, a tornado could represent a literal storm, or it could represent a storm in my family or in my business.)	Is intercession needed for someone? More insight or interpretation needed?

## WEEK THREE | *Barriers to Hearing*



### Hearing Assessment #3

1. When you pray, do you tend to do all the talking, or do you stop and ask specific questions, giving time to hear God's response to your prayers?

I ask questions but don't typically hear anything specific back.

I do most of the talking, but occasionally sense God speaking something to me.

My prayer life is a lot of back and forth. I ask a lot of questions and get detailed responses.

2. What are some specific obstacles in your life that hinder you from hearing God's voice on a regular basis?

I don't really take the time to be alone with God

I don't ask specific questions when I pray

My life is really busy and full of distractions/demands

I'm not really confident that I can hear from God

I still have the feeling that God is distant or wouldn't want to speak to me directly, so I don't expect it

I'm struggling with ongoing sin in my life and the shame keeps me from being able to hear from Him

I pray about the big things, but don't ask about day-to-day stuff

I'm too focused on my own life and circumstances

3. Based on your choices and thought-life over the past 6-12 months, how much do you actually trust God (i.e., submitted to Him) with the most important parts of your life? Rank your trust from 1 to 10 where **1 is no trust** and **10 is full trust**.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

4. God generally talks to me most about...

Scripture

My own life/heart

My family

My work

Who He is

Ministry opportunities

His perspective

The Lost



## GOING DEEPER

### 1. Simeon in Luke 2 - Friendship with God

**Luke 2:25-35** *Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."*

- Simeon was an \_\_\_\_\_ guy who was faithful and obedient to the Lord.
- Simeon had a real-time, \_\_\_\_\_-led relationship with God.
- Simeon had unusual prophetic \_\_\_\_\_.
- He saw Jesus bringing salvation to the \_\_\_\_\_, not just the Jews, something even the apostles in Acts struggled to grasp.
- He saw that the Messiah would come to \_\_\_\_\_ before He would come to rule as King.
- Simeon had the revelation that he was God's \_\_\_\_\_.

**John 15:15** *No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

### 2. Nathanael in John 1 - Agreeing with what God says about you.

**John 1:47-48** *Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?"*

- Nathanael didn't \_\_\_\_\_ with who Jesus said he was.

- When we can't receive who Jesus says we are we open ourselves up to believing a \_\_\_\_\_ and following the voice of the enemy.



## **BARRIERS TO HEARING**

### 1. **Distance, Dullness, and Disobedience**

The words from God's mouth are life-giving bread and water, but most commonly we experience a breakdown because of 1 of these 3 things:

- **DISTANCE** - lack of time and proximity. This happens when we're not making time to search His Word and pray.
- **DULLNESS** - lack of expectation (faith). This happens when we're coming out of habit/discipline, but we don't expect to "hear" from Him.
- **DISOBEDIENCE** - lack of trust or follow through. This happens when we're coming and hearing, but because of fear, offenses, or distractions, we're not doing what He said.

In which of the 3 things do you tend to experience a breakdown?

Distance  
(little time invested)

Dullness  
(low expectations or  
not hearing)

Disobedience  
(lack of follow  
through)

Why do you think this is happening? \_\_\_\_\_

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### 2. **An Uncultivated Heart**

**Proverbs 4:20, 22-26** *My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. **Keep your heart with all diligence** (picture of a watchman in a tower looking out over the garden), for out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you. Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established.*

- **Cultivate** - *to prepare and use land (or heart) for crops or gardening.*  
Synonyms: clear, till, dig, fertilize, weed. It's our job, with the partnership and help of the Holy Spirit, to cultivate and prepare the soil of our hearts to be able to receive God's Word.
- **Mark 4** mentions 4 types of ground, or soil, into which God's Word is sown: 1) hard ground, 2) rocky ground, 3) thorny ground, and 4) good ground.

<i>Hard Ground</i>	<i>Rocky Ground</i>	<i>Thorny Ground</i>	<i>Good Ground</i>
<u>Closed</u> : hardened by deceitfulness of sin (Heb 3)	<u>Hard</u> : hidden areas of bitterness, unforgiveness, offense.	<u>Overgrown</u> : full of worries, love of money, desire for material pleasure	<u>Cleared</u> of all foreign objects and available
<u>Hardened</u> by being trampled underfoot by men (fear of man)	<u>Shallow</u> : disobedient lifestyle (foolish man), not counting the cost when it comes to the Word and commitments	Hunger for God's Word eventually gets squeezed out	Hears the Word, agrees with it (faith) and bears fruit (obedience)
<u>Unaware</u> of spiritual warfare & prey to demonic attack	<u>No ability to endure</u> difficulty/trials	Initial growth but <u>unfruitful</u> in the end	Resists attack, endures trials and is free from compromise

- Which of the 4 types of ground best represents where you are right now in your journey with God?

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Hard Ground</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Rocky Ground</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Thorny Ground</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Good Ground</b>
(I feel hard and closed off to God and God's people.)	(I have unreconciled hurts & offenses in my past that are affecting my relationship with God and others.)	(I tolerate some level of compromise in my personal life and/or have a lot of money/job worries that keep me preoccupied and unable to invest in what God's Kingdom.)	(God has brought me to a repentant place where I have become a blessing to my family & others and obedient to His word/leading on a daily basis.)

**3. Being Unfamiliar with the Scriptures**

- not knowing God's true nature and character
- unaware of God's promises, instructions, conditions, and warnings
- How familiar are you with the entire Bible, both Old and New Testament?

Very Familiar

(Have read it cover-to-cover. Study and memorize it regularly.)

Somewhat Familiar

(Have done reading plans and have a handful of passages or verses memorized.)

Not Familiar

(I've never read the Bible and I'm not familiar with the basic storyline.)

**4. Resistance to Reconciliation with God, People and Self**

- lack of intimacy and trust in vertical and horizontal relationships
- causes: 1) ignorance, 2) fear of confrontation, or 3) willful disobedience
- blinded by bitterness and unforgiveness
- **Ephesians 4:26-27, 31-32** *Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another**, even as God in Christ forgave you.*
- Are there people in your life who have hurt or offended you in the past and you still feel the pain or bitterness? Are there traumatic events that happened that still cause fear or anxiety? List any unreconciled relationships or painful events still controlling your thoughts, emotions, or behaviors:

People: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Events: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Lack of Confidence**

- confidence from identity versus confidence from competence
- growing what you have through practice and obedience
- Do you lack confidence in hearing God's voice because of insecurity or because you haven't practiced hearing and developing the relationship?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## 6. Wrong Teaching

- *The lie of cessation.* Many modern theologians, Bible training schools, Christian universities and pastors teach that God stopped speaking directly to people after the first century apostles died and now only speaks through His written word. These same people wrongly teach that miracles, prophecy, five-fold ministry gifts, and any other miraculous, power-based activities of the Holy Spirit have all ceased. This is a false teaching known as cessationism and it is particularly dangerous because it denies Jesus' command to ALL of His followers to go into all the world preaching the Gospel *with power*, and it removes the reality of 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, a gospel that rests on God's power, not human wisdom. It wasn't just Peter's generation that needed God's power.
- *The lie of distance.* One lie of religion is that God has detached Himself from man because of sin and it's up to man to make up the difference. The grain of truth in this lie is that God is holy and unapproachable and cannot leave sin unreconciled or unpunished. But in Christ we have Immanuel, God with us, who has taken our sin so that we can know the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ. The truth is that Jesus made up the difference on the cross. The veil that separated us from His presence was torn when His body was torn. He did all of this out of love for us, and now invites us into an intimate, daily relationship with Him.
- *The lie of silence.* Otherwise known as the "desert season" or "dark night of the soul," many teach that God initiates seasons of divine silence in order to "test" His people by removing His voice or leading. For example, some say "The teacher is silent while the student is taking the test." These teachings seem logical based on our human experiences, but are not backed by Scripture. God did not intend for Israel to journey through the desert for 40 years, but even in their 40 years of wandering, His word, His miracles, and His presence were always with them. Psalm 1 teaches us that we live rooted by the water, not in the desert. Isaiah 30:19-21 shows us that the teacher isn't silent during the test. Characters like Judas Maccabees, John the Baptist, Anna, and Simeon show us that there was not 400 years of silence between Old and New Testaments.
- *The lie of posturing.* I have to be something other than myself before God in order for Him to accept me. Talk differently. Act better.
- *The lie of religious works.* Love, grace, and faith-based righteousness ultimately produce a healthy sense of duty and a desire for discipline (self-control), but religion tries to go at this backwards, using duty and discipline or "striving" as a means to please God, overcome sin, and become righteous.

**Galatians 3:3-5** *This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? ...Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

- What is a wrong teaching in your past that has influenced your expectation to hear God's voice?

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### 7. **Ongoing Sin That Is Tolerated**

- fear, anxiety, worry - are you overly busy or relying on media/entertainment to help you feel normal? If you're struggling with a spirit of fear, do a little inventory. Are you taking in fear from any source like TV, movies, books, or listening regularly to a family member or media outlet that uses fear/control?
- unbelief, doubt - If you're struggling with confusion, same thing. Are you entertaining faith and doubt, God's word and people's opinions, at the same time? Are you focusing on the negative or on what *could* happen if God's doesn't come through?
- pride, self-focus, judgment of self and others
- sexual sin, pornography, wandering eye, or emotional/mental compromise
- tolerating outbursts of anger and rage
- controlling or manipulative behavior
- shame, self-pity and self-criticism
- gossip & slander - partnering with the Accuser against our brothers and against God's creation cuts off the prophetic flow in our lives. This is the demonic "wisdom" James is referring to in James 3:13-18.

**John 8:34-35** *Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.*

Are there areas of ongoing sin in your life, even subtle ones?

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### 8. **Lies We Continue to Believe**

- About God - Most of Satan's lies are against God's character and His goodness and love towards us.
- **EXAMPLES:** He wasn't there for me. He doesn't love me. He passed me over for someone better or more qualified than me. He isn't paying attention. He's too big to care about me or notice me. He's too nice to judge me or hold me accountable for sin I refuse to repent of.
- About Ourselves - Satan also lies about our identity and our value to God.

- **EXAMPLES:** I'm not worthy of God's love. I'm not loved as much as \_\_\_\_\_. I'm a complete disappointment. My voice isn't valuable or worth being heard. I need to be in control in order to be safe. I'm a complete failure. I have to provide for myself and protect myself since no one else is going to do it.
- About Judgement and Sin - Satan loves to numb people to the reality of sin and judgment so that we continue to justify sin and avoid thinking about eternal consequences of our actions and decisions. These lies dull us to the fear of the Lord and the sensitivity/humility it takes to consistently hear God's voice.

**1 Peter 4:1-6** *Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.*

- **EXAMPLES:** I'll be ok in eternity as long as I'm basically a good person. I said a prayer once, so I'm good as long as I make it into heaven. I'm not hurting anyone or committing major sins, so I'm safe. If I go to church and do good things I'll be better off than most people who don't really care.

## **LET'S PRACTICE**

Many believers don't ask God specific, thoughtful questions. We want you to develop this critical skill in your relationship with God...asking good questions. Let's practice!

1. In this season of your life, what is the most common negative thought, lie, or temptation you're struggling with? Write it out in the space below. (Examples: Fear or anxiety about the future, a medical report, bills, or job. Shame/guilt about past sin or the affects of bad decisions on other people. Feeling alone or unloved. Lust, addiction, or struggle with pornography. Insecurity with people or fear about a role you're in at work)

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Once you've identified the thought, lie, or temptation, admit it out loud to the Father and then ask, "Father, what do You say about this?" or "What do You think about this thought/issue?" Write what you hear, sense, or see:

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2. Go back through the "Barriers to Hearing" list and ask the Father to show you which barrier you're up against that is the most important to address in this season of your life. Pray something like, "Father, show me what I don't see. Show me where there are critical barriers in my heart keeping me from hearing your voice." Take a few minutes to listen. What did you see, hear, or feel? What barriers did He focus on?

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Once you've identified one or more specific barriers to hearing, ask the Father what specifically He wants you to do first to start dealing with each barrier. You might pray something like, "Father, what's the next step I need to take to address this barrier in my heart?" Take a few minutes to listen and then write down what you heard or felt.

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## WEEK FOUR | *The Key of Identity*



### Hearing Assessment #4

1. If you had to rank your confidence in hearing God's voice on a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being the lowest and least confident and 10 being the highest and most confident, how would you rank your confidence in your ability to hear? Circle one.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Was your answer different than at the beginning of Week One? \_\_\_\_\_

2. When you hear God's voice, what does the tone of His voice sound or feel like?

Loving       Harsh       Judgmental       Demanding  
 Patient       Disappointed       Unemotional       Distant

3. What are your assumptions about how long it takes to pray and hear from God?

DAYS: I will typically fast and pray multiple days if I want to hear from God about an important decision.       HOURS: I expect to spend multiple hours in praise and worship, reading the word and prayer before I ask God any questions.       MINUTES: It may take seconds or minutes, but I simply ask questions throughout the day and expect to hear answers.

4. If you had to rank your enjoyment in spending time talking with God on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest and least enjoyable and 10 being the highest and most enjoyable, how would you rank your enjoyment? Circle one.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

5. If you had to rank your expectation that you're going to hear a specific response from God in prayer on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being NO expectation and 10 being very HIGH expectation, how would you rank your expectation? Circle one.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

6. What do you believe it means that God loves you?

I have a hard time believing that God loves me. It feels more like He tolerates me.

I believe God loves me because the Bible says so, but it would be hard to believe He actually likes or enjoys me.

I think God loves me along with a whole lot of other people. It's His nature, but I don't necessarily "feel" loved by Him in a personal way.

I feel loved by God in a very personal way and the way He speaks with me and treats me lets me know He likes being with me.



## GOING DEEPER

1. Jesus' identity as the Son brings us into the freedom of sonship.

- **John 8:34-36** *Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.*
- Free from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

2. The Children of Israel operated out of 3 basic mindsets or identities:

- \_\_\_\_\_ in Egypt, \_\_\_\_\_ in the Promised Land and \_\_\_\_\_ during their exile.

3. These 3 mindsets or identities create filters through which we see the Father, the Kingdom of God and our inheritance in Christ.

- These identities determine what we believe about our access to God's love and our ability to walk in the authority He has given us in Christ.
- Why is sonship the key to freedom? The truth about our inheritance destroys Satan's lie that man could become "like God" by his own effort. The truth is that by inheritance and identity, man already was like God, made in His image.



Son	Slave	Orphan
God-focused	Sin-focused	Needs-focused
Calls God "Abba/Papa" because the love of Christ is poured out in his heart.	God is only "God". Fights revelation of "Abba" from performance mindset.	Hard to address God at all. Feels God doesn't see him, like he's been passed over for one more worthy.
Serves with God and others in the work of the Gospel (Mark 16:20; Phil 2:22).	Hard time accepting true brotherhood; feels close to others, but doesn't feel intimacy of having true brothers/sisters in Christ	Competes with others in the work of the Gospel, insecure when others succeed or seem to advance.
Lives from God's presence (flexible).	Lives from principles (predictable, measurable).	Lives from "rights" in Christ.
Lives by faith. Focused on what God has made available in Christ.	Driven by fear. Focused on what he feels he must produce so he isn't judged.	Driven by need. Focused on what he doesn't have as an excuse for unfruitfulness.
Motivated by God's love and seeing love develop in others.	Motivated by production.	Motivated by the approval of others.
Bears fruit naturally out of obedient trust.	Driven to produce fruit through discipline.	Feels guilty/ashamed for not being able to bear fruit.
Servant leadership mindset. How can I serve others in a way that shows them God's love?	Performance mindset. I need to do as much as possible for others to earn their approval / respect.	Entitlement/victim mindset. Others owe me because I don't have enough.
Receives freely from God.	Works to please God.	Begs as if God doesn't want to give, expects gifts to come at a price (Lam 5:2-4).
Lives by faith. Focused on what God has made available in Christ.	Driven by fear. Focused on what he feels he must produce.	Driven by need/lack. Focused on what he doesn't have.
Lives by the Spirit of Adoption, free from the law of sin and death (Rom 8:15).	Lives under fear of judgment, powerless to break out of cycles of sin (Rom 6:6).	Lives alone, overwhelmed by opposition from people and the enemy.
Feels chosen and reconciled.	Feels judged and rejected.	Feels forgotten and abandoned.



## **SON, SLAVE, OR ORPHAN EXERCISE**

This exercise is designed to help you discover which areas of your heart and mind are submitted to the truth of sonship in Christ Jesus and which areas are still affected by slave or orphan thinking.

As you read through the descriptions, check 1 box in each section. At the bottom of each section, the explanation for each description is provided.

- I tend to focus on what I need but don't have. What I'm not becomes my excuse.
- It's hard to look past my own faults and failures. I'm my own worst critic.
- I tend to focus on what God is saying or what He has already done for me. I don't concern myself with stuff unless it's from Him.

This is a \_\_\_\_\_ mindset. **Top:** an orphan is needs focused. **Middle:** a slave is sin focused. **Bottom:** a son is God-focused.

- I struggle with a performance mindset, trying to do things right. It's weird to think about calling God "daddy" or "papa".
- It feels natural at this point in my walk with God to call Him "daddy". There have been many times when I have felt the tangible love of God.
- I often feel like God doesn't see me, like I've been passed over for someone who is more worthy or more qualified than me.

This is a \_\_\_\_\_ mindset. **Top:** a slave is law focused. **Middle:** a son is father focused. **Bottom:** an orphan is self focused, yet feels unseen.

- It's a joy to serve God alongside others, even when they are more gifted or anointed than I am. I view their gifts/talents as a win for the Kingdom.
- I have a hard time accepting true brotherhood/sisterhood. I feel somewhat close to people in the body, but I don't have a sense of intimacy with them, like they're true brothers/sisters in Christ.
- I silently compete with others, even believers with whom I serve, and feel insecure when others succeed or seem to advance when I don't.

This is a \_\_\_\_\_ mindset. **Top:** a son cooperates with God and others. **Middle:** a slave tolerates others. **Bottom:** an orphan competes with others.

- In my heart I feel truly chosen by God and reconciled to Him.
- I often feel judged by God and rejected.
- I typically feel like God has forgotten me or abandoned me.

This is a \_\_\_\_\_ mindset. **Top:** Son **Middle:** Slave **Bottom:** Orphan

4. Based on your answers, what is your predominant mindset?

- Son
- Slave
- Orphan

2. How has your predominant mindset affected the 1) frequency with which you hear the Father and 2) the way you hear Him (the “tone” of His voice)?

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 **LET'S PRACTICE**

Many believers don't ask God specific, thoughtful questions. We want you to develop this critical skill in your relationship with God...asking good questions. Let's practice!

1. Look back at your Son, Slave, or Orphan Exercise and select an area where a slave or orphan mindset has influenced your thinking. Now take a few minutes and run that through 3 steps: 1) ask the Father what lie you've believed and write it down, 2) repent for believing the lie, then 3) ask Him what the truth is and write it down.

STEP ONE: Identify the Lie: \_\_\_\_\_

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STEP TWO: Repent for believing the lie.

STEP THREE: Identify the Truth: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What is an important decision you need to make in this season? Is it about a new job? Are you praying about a geographical move, building a house, making an investment, putting your kid(s) in a different school, getting into or out of a relationship, starting a new business?

Write it down:

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Now, take a minute to tell the Father about it and thank Him that He wants to speak to you and give you wisdom.

Next, write down the most important question you have about this decision. If you're stuck wondering what to ask, start by asking the Holy Spirit how to phrase the right question. Pray "Holy Spirit, what question do I need to be asking about this decision right now?" Write down what you hear or sense.

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Now, ask the Father your question out loud and then stop to listen. Write down what you sense, hear or see.

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## SCRIPTURES ON YOUR IDENTITY AS A CHILD OF GOD

### Sons by Faith in Jesus Christ

**John 1:12** *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name...*

**Ephesians 1:5** *He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will...*

**Galatians 3:26** *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

### Role of the Holy Spirit in Our Sonship

**Romans 8:15-16** *For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.*

**1 Corinthians 2:12** *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God...*

**Galatians 4:5-7** *...so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.*

**Romans 8:14, 23** *For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.*

**2 Timothy 1:7** *For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.*