

Resonate- How to hear God's voice - Part 1 – Through God's Word

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BIG IDEA – Primary way to hear from God is through the Bible.

scripture focus - Hebrews 4:12 NLT For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

Have you ever met anyone who speed-reads a love letter written to them? Usually not. When we receive a handwritten card or message from someone, we usually take time to fully read it; take each word into view and let it slowly sink into our soul. It's not about reading the content; it's about allowing the impact of the powerful and meaningful words to resonate within us. God's Word is a love letter to us! It's alive and has the power to speak to us today. But how do written words help us hear God? Let's explore this together.

I do not speed-read the Bible even to grasp the entire context of the book or chapter's content. I cherish it, I allow my heart to enter and engage in the Bible because it is the living Word of God. I let it penetrate my soul, correcting, encouraging, inspiring, and maturing me. When I read the Bible, I feel the presence and pleasure of God coursing through me.

I have questions, I see humor. I allow certain words or phrases to lift off the page and highlight right in front of my eyes. I love God's Word.

When I read the Psalms, I am comforted. When I read Proverbs, I am challenged and feel God's wisdom seeping into my mind. When I read the Gospels, I am amazed and long to see God move among

us like Jesus walked the ancient streets of the city. When I read the Torah, I see the the long story of how we began and why Israel was so important for our faith. When I read the books written by God's spokespersons (the prophets), I feel the pain and long suffering of what it's like to keep us connected to God. The letters to the churches bring encouragement and correction to reality under the new covenant with God.

I see God working, I feel God wooing, I receive a grounded, deep-rooted understanding of who He is and what He wants to do in the world and in my life. I learn to live and grow by His words and become familiar with God's ways.

The reason I chose the series title, "resonate," is because it is a great word to describe what happens when we not only line up with God's Word, but we actually synchronize or begin to tune into what God is doing in our lives and our world. The future of the Church will be in the hands of people who resonate, match, or harmonize with God's will. Just following the rote systems and rhythms of the past will not be enough to flourish and be fully engaged in future.

How do we hear from God?

And what do we do once we listen to what God wants us to be and do?

My whole journey as a follower of Jesus began with God revealing Himself to me as a lost and broken teenager. That was just the beginning, the initiation to say yes and to commit to follow Jesus for the entirety of my life. The very first steps were learning to hear His voice and be obedient. Before I knew anything else, I knew God's voice.

That may not be your experience whatsoever! That's great. However, the next steps were to dig into the Bible, the Word of God for myself. I never read the Bible thinking one day I would need to study and be able to teach it to others. I virtually knew nothing

about how God worked, His plans or His purpose for my life. It all began when I bought my first Bible and started reading it for myself.

Hearing God's voice with the understanding that what I hear will NEVER conflict or contradict what is written in the Bible. Sermons are fine, Bible podcasts are great, books and discussions about the Bible are wonderful. However, none of those things can ever replace the firsthand experience of knowing God through His Word. It is rock-solid, never changing and completely dependable for living a godly life.

So many believers get caught up in controversies, conspiracies, and interpretational differences. Don't fall for that. Know the Bible for yourself. Don't expect a friend, teacher, or pastor to do the relationship work for you. God wants to meet with you.

1. The Word of God reveals the character of God.

It's powerful –

Hebrews 4:12 NLT For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

Isaiah 55:11 NIV

so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

It's important to know the nature and disposition of God (from the Bible itself) and determine that it is God's character that becomes our anchor, our truth, our north star.

Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology writes, the written Word of God is “considered to be **God's own words, even though they are written down mostly by human beings and always in human language. Still, they are absolutely authoritative and absolutely true: to disobey them or disbelieve them is a serious sin and brings judgment from God** (1 Cor. 14:37; Jer. 36:29–31).

It is from that foundation that we determine everything we know about God that helps us not just know Him but know ourselves in relationship to Him. That also directs our thoughts, opinions, and behaviors concerning others. When God says we are loved, we are loved. When He says we can be forgiven, we can be forgiven. These are true and everything else is a lie. The Bible, in reading, hearing, and practicing will have a miraculous and mysterious effect on our soul. When we hear it and obey it, we are hearing and obeying God. And the Bible will 100% resonate with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

2. The Bible gives us our “mode of operandi,” not just what to believe but how to behave.

It's effective –

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NLT

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

What we believe and how we behave based on the Bible. This is where it gets messy. Depending on which book we read from in the Bible, we can get a different impression on what we should believe and how we should behave. We have major parts of God's story to reconcile!

For example, we have the story, in John 8:1-11, of the religious leaders using a woman caught in sin tells us that they were pulling their belief and behavior from the Old Testament Law.

Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22 both demand that both parties involved with adultery are to be put to death! Yet, John writes that Jesus directly addressed that law. In fulfillment of God's will in light of the New Covenant, which was being displayed right in front of them, Jesus gives us the full picture, the full character of God by giving mercy not judgment.

Why do I highlight that? Because if we pick and choose our understanding of God our behavior towards others from one part of the Bible without understanding the whole, we get a skewed view of God and others. Jesus, being THE Word means that what He does, what He says doesn't give the "new and improved God," but rather the complete, fulfilled picture of who God has been all along and reveals the purpose and reason God took humans through a very long season under the law.

Let me be clear, the words and behaviors of Jesus are the exact representation of God the Father. As we read and study through the New Testament, we can be assured that Jesus is the primary means of understanding and adhering to faith and practice!

3. It's durable and eternal

It's durable and eternal -

Luke 1:37 NLT For the Word of God will never fail. (angel's promise to Mary).

Matthew 24:35 NLT Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.

Isaiah 40:8 NLT The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever.

What do I mean by durable and eternal?

Well, it's dependable, trustworthy. It's not just long lasting, it's everlasting. The Bible does not bend nor waiver with culture or ideologies. Like God, it does not change. It is independently unaffected by the highs and lows of our human story. It requires no historical revision to adjust to our enlightenments, environments, or ecclesiastical traditions. It stands, it stays when all else fails. Rulers, presidents, or kings; economies, wars, disasters, pandemics, and politics; it will outlast even celebrations and sufferings.

Don Stewart writes, "The Bible has survived through time! The first book of the Bible was written some three thousand five hundred

years ago, while the last one was completed nearly two thousand years ago.”

Not only is the Bible the primary means of hearing God's voice, but its purpose is not just to know about Him but know Him and learn to walk with God through life. The Bible is alive and speaks to us because it is God's Words to us. God's desires are to change us to become the image of Christ.

The primary purpose is to change us, lead us well before God can use us to accomplish His will in others.

As we go through this series, resonate, we are learning how to hear God's voice and be obedient to it through the Bible, the Holy Spirit and each other.

Listening to God and obeying Him is critical to forming us into the image, the character of Christ in us and through us.

As we will discover, **the further we drift away from the listening to God through the Bible, the Spirit and each other, the harder it becomes to do life with God.** We become more cynical, more judgmental and harden our hearts towards God and others.

I've seen it happen hundreds of times over.

I believe it starts by not spending time with God, in His Word, allowing it to daily renew, restore and refresh our souls. But not spending time in the Word makes it either more difficult or disinterested in hearing from God through the Holy Spirit or another brother or sister in Christ. I just lose that connection more easily. I even find myself being way less tuned into what God wants to do in me and through me. I have even gotten more agitated at the idea of Church or being around other believers.

My drift.

I was being a professional Christian, but not really a son who walks with God. I was not involved as a pastor at a church at the time. I was regularly attending church just because it was the right thing to do. I did not feel connected nor needed in our local church and I was okay with that. I travelled about 60 days a year, speaking in churches or training others how to direct a camp for children, 6 to 12, in foster care.

My wake-up call came through a friend whose husband was in the hospital and dying. I knew he didn't believe in God and felt that it was critical that I put my pastor hat on and go visit with him.

NOTES

Scriptures

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Questions

Q: Do you believe that the Bible can speak to you?

Q: If yes, how have you experienced God's Word speaking to you?

Q: Do you think you would pay more attention if God spoke to you from heaven or through the voice of a living prophet than if he spoke to you from the written words of scripture?

Q: Would you believe or obey such words more readily than you do Scripture?

Q: Do you think your present level of response to the written words of Scripture is an appropriate one?

Q: When you think about the many ways in which God speaks and the frequency with which God communicates with his creatures through these means, what conclusions might you draw concerning the nature of God and the things that bring delight to him?

Wayne Grudem

What are the different forms of the Word of God?

What is meant by the phrase "the Word of God"? Actually, there are several different meanings taken by this phrase in the Bible. It is helpful to distinguish these different senses clearly at the beginning of this study.

A. "THE WORD OF GOD" AS A PERSON: JESUS CHRIST

B. "THE WORD OF GOD" AS SPEECH BY GOD

1. God's Decrees
2. God's Words of Personal Address
3. God's Words as Speech Through Human Lips
4. God's Words in Written Form (the Bible)

C. THE FOCUS OF OUR STUDY

Of all the forms of the Word of God, the focus of our study in systematic theology is God's Word in written form, that is, the Bible. This is the form of God's Word that is available for study, for public inspection, for repeated examination, and as a basis for mutual discussion. It tells us about and points us to the Word of God as a person, namely Jesus Christ, whom we do not now have present in bodily form on earth. Thus, we are no longer able to observe and imitate his life and teachings firsthand.

Internet Links

CRU – [How Do I Hear God's Voice?](#)

[How To Hear God's voice: The Complete Guide](#)

Don Stewart, [The Bible's Survival](#) and [Ten reasons to trust the Bible](#)