

THE SILENCE OF GOD

Everyone wants to hear from God, but surely not everyone does, or at least they are not all hearing from the SAME God. Before I deal with the topic of God's silence, when we don't hear from Him, I need briefly to review some of the main ways in which we do hear the voice of God.

Some people claim to have heard the audible voice of God speak to them, but this seems to be a fairly rare occurrence, though its veracity is supported in scripture. Other people, contend that God regularly speaks to them through dreams and/or visions. Again, scripture supports this, and as long as these dreams and visions do not deviate from revealed scripture, they are a valid method which God uses quite regularly.

Many people, listen for the 'still small voice' which speaks to us in our quiet times as we earnestly seek the Lord. However, the most common way God speaks to us, is through His Word; either directly, as we meditate on it; or indirectly through enlightened preaching. If you are not involved in regularly studying the Bible, as opposed to merely reading it, then it is unlikely that you will hear very much from God. Prayer is our way of talking to Him, and usually, His word is how He replies. His silence can be deafening.

Why then, if we are actively studying our Bible, do we sometimes call out to God and get only silence? Why, sometimes, do our prayers not seem to be answered? Let's examine what scripture has to say.

1. The Position of Christians versus non-Christians.

(a) As Christians, we have a covenant relationship with Him. He has promised never to leave us or forsake us. In fact, if we examine the actual verse, we see its full import.

Hebrews 13:5 contains three negatives of increasing intensity and is best rendered in the Amplified translation. *'Let your character or moral disposition be free from love of money (including greed, avarice, lust, and craving for earthly possessions) and be satisfied with your present (circumstances and with what you have); for He (God) Himself has said, I will not in any way fail you, nor give you up, nor leave you without support. (I will) not, (I will) not, (I will) not in any degree leave you helpless, nor forsake, nor let you down (relax My hold on you)! (Assuredly not!).'*

Non-Christians have no such relationship, so God has no responsibility to answer their call. He may choose to do so, He is sovereign, but He doesn't HAVE to.

If we want to hear from God, then we must belong to God. John 8:47 (Amp) *"Whoever is of God listens to God. (Those who belong to God hear the words of God.) This is the reason that you do not listen (to those words, to Me); because you do not belong to God and are not of God or in harmony with Him."*

(b) God doesn't answer the enemies of His people.

Before we were saved, we were at enmity with God. These three verses should suffice to illustrate this.

(Rom 8:7 KJV) Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

(Eph 2:16 KJV) And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

(James 4:4 KJV) Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Therefore, because of this enmity between the world and God, these verses apply.

2 Samuel 22:41-42 "You have made my enemies turn their backs to me, that I might cut off those who hate me. They looked, but there was none to save - even to the Lord, but He did not answer them.

Psalm 18:41 "They cried (for help), but there was none to deliver - even unto the Lord, but He answered them not."

If we do not belong to God, then we are at enmity with Him. In that case, He does not have to respond to our pleas. However, as Christians, we have an everlasting covenant with Him, and He promises never to leave us, nor forsake us, so we know He is there to

answer our prayers. Why then, if we do belong to Him, does His silence sometimes dominate our experience?

2. We already know the answer - it's in His Word and we need to read it!! In fact, we need to study it and meditate upon it. If God has already given us the answer in His word, then He is not going to repeat Himself. We are responsible to know what the Bible has to say in any situation. If you're not hearing from God, then get into His word and learn of Him from there.
3. We ask with the wrong motive. James 4:3 "You do ask God for them, yet fail to receive, because you ask with wrong purpose and evil, selfish motives. Your intention is (when you get what you desire) to spend it in sensual pleasures."
God looks at our hearts; if our motive in asking is correct; if it's in line with His word, then he will answer.
4. Lack of Faith. James 1:5-7

James 1:

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

These are all very simple basic reasons for God not responding.

5. We don't listen properly, so we don't hear what God is saying:

*Mark 4:9 "He who has ears to hear, let him be hearing (and let him **consider**, and **comprehend**).*

*Math 13:9 "He who has ears (to hear), let him be listening and let him **consider** and perceive and **comprehend** by hearing.*

There is a world of difference between **hearing** and **listening**. We listen all the time, but often we don't really hear what is being said. When it comes to the Word, it might best be illustrated in this way. Listening to God, is what we do when we read the Word. Hearing is what happens when we **meditate** in the Word.

Math 13:13-16;

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

This passage, seems to apply to much of the modern church. What a condemnation, what a disappointment.

Prov 1:23-28.

23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

The word translated ‘reproof’, is the Hebrew word *towkechah* which means a chastisement, or a rebuke. This verse speaks of repentance, signified by the use of the word ‘turn’.

24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

This will happen!! Why, oh why, don’t people listen properly to the voice of God?

6. We don't like what we're hearing, so we don't "hear" it, or we want another answer. Like visiting a doctor, we want a second opinion. The problem is, there isn't one.

John 6:60 "When His disciples heard this, many of them said, This is a hard and difficult and strange saying. Who can stand to hear it?"

Zechariah 7:11-13

11 But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.

12 Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.

13 Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:

7. We're trying in our own strength and ability, so God backs off and lets us.
8. We're ignoring God's perfect timing and we want him to act NOW.
 - The Life of Joseph.
 - 5 Points that help determine God's timing, not ours.

God Acts When:

1. We're at the end of our own strength.
2. The wisdom of men comes to nothing.
3. Only He can act - it's something outside of ourselves.
4. He will succeed exactly where we failed.
5. He can reach us where we are, without any effort on our part.

This, of course, is so that He receives the Glory.

9. There is the practice of evil or doctrinal error. (false prophets).

Psalm 50:16-21

16 But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?

17 Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.

18 When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.

19 Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.

20 Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.

21 These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.

Isaiah 1:14-16

14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

Micah 3:4-7

4 Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.

5 *Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him.*

6 *Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them.*

7 *Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God.*

Jeremiah 11:10-11

10 *They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.*

11 *Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.*

10. Disobedience

1 Samuel 28:6, 15-18

6 *And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.*

15 *And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.*

16 *Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?*

17 *And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David:*

18 *Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.*

11. Iniquity in Heart

Isaiah 59:1-2

59:1 *Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:*

2 *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*

Ps 66:18 "If I regard iniquity in my Heart, the Lord will not hear me."

John 9:31 "We know that God does not listen to sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and a worshiper of Him and does His will, He listens to him.

The obvious question here then, is ‘will sin stop you hearing the voice of God, or will it stop God answering Prayer?’ Let me offer you three brief thoughts for you to ponder.

The Parable of Prodigal Son, illustrates God’s love for us, even when we sin. It doesn’t excuse the sin, and repentance is a very important aspect of

the story, but God will always be there waiting for us. (See my study on this Parable for more detail.)

The Grace of God, knows no bounds. It is a part of His very nature and it is extended to all of us who believe. Never abuse this grace, but be ever mindful of it when God seems far away.

Finally, your Heart attitude is paramount. God always looks at your heart first and everything else after that. King David sinned time and time again, but he was called a man after God's own heart. If he could clearly hear from God, then so can we. Keep your heart right, and all else will follow.