



How do I hear God's voice in my life? Even those who have been faithful followers of Jesus for decades wrestle with this essential question. With each new day and every new experience, we learn and grow in our understanding of God and the way God's Spirit is working in our midst. None of us have the final and complete answer to that question, but Paul's words here in Romans add clarity to the process by which we continue to grow.

Our "spiritual act of worship," according to Paul, is to "offer our bodies as living sacrifices." This involves seeing every moment of our lives as an opportunity to honor and serve our Creator, and in that, to no longer "conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds." Paul then articulates what we can expect as a result of that activity. "Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will."

How do I hear God's voice in my life? Honor God. Serve God. Conform your life to God. Allow God's Spirit to clean out your heart and renew your mind. And trust that along the way, you will day by day grow in your ability to hear and respond to God's directions for your life.

GPS for Families

GrowPrayStudy.org/family

Read: Acts 1:1-10. Read from a children's Bible if you have young children.

When Jesus left the earth, he told his disciples he would leave the Holy Spirit with them to help them do his work. The Holy Spirit is still here with us every day, just like a good friend.

Ask: Who are some friends that you love to be around? Why do you like to be around that person? (They are fun, they listen, they help me, etc.) Say: God gave us a helper in life besides our family and friends. He gave us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came to give the disciples (including you) power to share his love with others.

Ask: What does it mean to have the power of the Holy Spirit? Say: It means we can do things using God's power that we could not do on our own. Philippians 4:13 says we can do all things through Christ who gives us strength. When we have God's power, we can be brave and we can share God's love with others, even though it may seem scary or hard to do.

Pray: Let's try to think of a way to share God's love with someone this week. Now let's pray for the Holy Spirit to give us his power to do so.

MESSAGE "God, How Do I Know It's You?"

SCRIPTURE 1 Corinthians 2:10-16

*Rev. Mike Ramsdell, Senior Pastor
miker@firstmethodistmansfield.org
facebook.com/mike.ramsdell1
www.mikeramsdell.com*

- The deep things of God
- The mind of Christ
- What God has given
- The Spirit discerns the spiritual

1. It's not about changing the world but being faithful to Jesus.
2. It's not about success but loving God and others.
3. It's not about happiness but holiness.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Holy Spirit, help me this day to cultivate an awareness of your work in my heart. I know that your presence in my life represents the same power at work in me that raised Jesus from the dead. Bring your power to bear on my life as I seek to honor you with my every thought, word and deed today and every day. I offer this prayer in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

Our readings for this week center around the theme of hearing God’s voice. Samuel played an important role in the Israelite nation, anointing Saul as its first king, and when God rejected Saul, it was Samuel who anointed David to succeed Saul. Our reading from today comes from Samuel’s early years when he was serving in the house of Eli and first experienced hearing God’s voice.

How does Samuel initially respond to the audible “call” from God? What does this say to us about the mystery of hearing God’s voice? Has there been a time in your life that you, through the benefit of hindsight, might recognize that God was speaking to you?

Samuel had the benefit of having a wise mentor like Eli to help him understand what he was experiencing. Who in your life has helped you listen more closely to God?

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The boy anointed by Samuel would grow to become the most successful and celebrated king of Israel, but David’s reign was not without controversy. His adulterous affair with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah who was serving in David’s army, was the darkest moment of David’s life. After Uriah’s death in battle, David took Bathsheba for his wife, further covering up his sin. God sent the prophet Nathan to convict David of his wrongdoing. After hearing Nathan’s parable and offering his own words of conviction against the “wicked” man in the story, Nathan replied, “You are the man.”

The Holy Spirit’s work includes words of comfort and conviction. We often seek out God’s encouragement and find ourselves avoiding the critique. When we truly hear God’s voice, we receive both. Which of these do you think is the most important for you to hear from God right now?

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Christianity began with the Jews in Jerusalem. Eventually it spread throughout the Roman Empire, including places like Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. The reality of both Jews and Gentiles becoming Christians stirred the first controversy within the church. Their debate centered around the question of whether Gentiles, those who had not previously been practicing Jews, had to adopt Judaism alongside their commitment to Christ. Acts 15 contains the church leadership’s response to this question.

Verse 28 articulates the conviction of these early church leaders to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit in responding to this debate. They understood their lives and work to be a partnership between themselves and the Holy Spirit. Do you subscribe to a similar belief? How do you live that out?

Is there anything in your life right now for which you need to seek guidance from the Holy Spirit?

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In Paul’s opening words of his letter to the church at Philippi, he writes, “I thank my God every time I remember you.” It is clear that this section of II Corinthians is from a very different kind of letter! In the opening chapter of Paul’s first letter to the church at Corinth, Paul begins by addressing division with the church. Paul’s “authority” to preach to the Corinthians had been challenged by some within this faith community. Paul speaks to that concern here.

In our reading from II Samuel on Tuesday, we noted that God’s Spirit speaks words of comfort as well as words of conviction. The Spirit also provides clarity and direction in the midst of division and conflict. Paul’s invitation to “examine yourselves” is a challenge for the Corinthians to be open to the Spirit.

How has God’s Spirit helped you in situations of conflict?

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