

HEARING FROM HEAVEN

How It's Done



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HEAVEN
How It's Done

A Get Activated! Book

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God Still Speaks!

God isn't dead! He's alive and well, and still ready, willing and able to speak to His children in this modern day and age—and He wants to speak to *you!*

How can that be? In order to comprehend the answer to that—how the great God and Creator of the universe could communicate directly with you, or why He would even want to—you must first understand how much God loves you. He loves you so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for your sins so that you could be forgiven and receive God's gift of eternal life in Heaven, simply by believing in Jesus and receiving Him as your Savior. Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, but He would have died for you alone. He and His Father love you that much!

In His love, God also gave you the Bible, through which He tells you how to live in love and harmony with Him and others. God's Words in the Bible are an endless source of faith, comfort, encouragement, instruction, wisdom, and strength of spirit. They can unlock for you some of His greatest

mysteries, and set His love and power to work in your busy and sometimes stressful life.

But God didn't stop there. He loves you so much that He not only wants to communicate with you through His written Word, but directly! He takes a loving personal interest in you, and wants to be involved in your life. He knows that you have questions and problems, and He wants to give you the answers and solutions. He also wants to speak personal words of love and encouragement to you, to boost your faith and reassure you during those rough times. He wants you to know how to be happy. And so He created a means of two-way communication, a channel between Him and you, so that you can talk to Him in prayer and in reply hear words He gives specially for you.

But what if you don't consider yourself very "spiritual" or close to God? Well, you'll be happy to know that God will speak to anyone who has a little childlike faith—and He *wants* to speak to *you*, to give you a chance to experience His infinite wisdom and boundless love. He wants to lead you step by step into a closer relationship with Him and a greater understanding of His will and ways. "Call unto Me," He says, "and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things which you know not."¹

God may speak to you in a number of ways: As you read the Bible, He may cause a particular passage to stand out to you and show you how it applies to your situation or how it answers a question you may have. He may not even use words—He may just give you an impression or inner conviction, a sort of intuitive knowledge about a particular situa-

¹ Jeremiah 33:3.

tion. He may speak to you through vivid dreams or visions. He may speak through others—godly counselors, whose wisdom and experience you can benefit from. Another wonderful way that God is able to speak to you is through the gift of prophecy, by which God can give valuable and practical guidance for your personal life.

Did you know that the principal dictionary definition of the word “prophecy” is not “a prediction,” but rather “a divinely inspired utterance”? In other words, prophecy is receiving a message directly from God. Whenever you hear words in your mind that you believe are from God and you say or record them somehow, you are prophesying. (Of course, you may also hear God’s voice at other times, when you don’t speak or write down what you receive, but for the sake of keeping things clear and simple, when the word “prophecy” is used throughout this book, it refers to messages from Heaven that are either spoken or recorded.)

There are many benefits to having and using the gift of prophecy: You can get to know God better and better understand His love and plan. He can give you precise answers to problems. He can comfort and encourage you when you’re sick or feeling low. He can help you show others His love and show you how you can help them with their problems. There is really no end to the list of good things prophecy can bring your way.

You can hear from Heaven! Put God to the test! See if He will not open to you the windows of Heaven and pour out such blessings on you—the treasures of His Words for you personally—that you will not be able to contain them all!

God is like a broadcasting station, broadcasting all the time. Just like the radio waves which are unseen in the air all around you this very minute, God's Spirit is ever present, waiting for you to make contact. And much the same as a simple little transistor radio, you have been designed by your Creator to receive those signals. God's power is always on. The message is always there. But in order to receive it, you must turn on and tune in to His frequency!

Compared to the tremendous power and complex operations of the broadcasting station, you, the operator of the receiver, need not have much power and only the simplest of skills. Prayer is the hand of faith that flips the switch and turns on what little power you have. And then the hand of hope tunes with expectancy, feeling for the frequency upon which God is broadcasting, and suddenly His great broadcasting station booms in with tremendous positive volume and power, and the messages come through loud and clear!

—D.B.B.



“Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever!” (Hebrews 13:8). Just as He spoke to men of old, His prophets of the past, so He speaks to us today. He is still alive, thank God!

—D.B.B.

Ground Rules

Once you're open to the idea that God can speak to you, what next? Well, the first thing you need to do is learn the basic ground rules.

1. Have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ

If you've received Jesus as your Savior, you've already met the first and most important requirement. When you opened your heart to Jesus, you began an intimate relationship with Him as not only your Savior, but as your friend, teacher and counselor.

If you haven't yet received Jesus, you can right now by praying a simple prayer like the following:

Dear Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God and that You died for me. I need Your love to cleanse me from my mistakes and wrongdoing. I now open the door of my heart and I ask You, Jesus, to please come into my life and give me Your free gift of eternal life. Amen.

2. Be filled with the Holy Spirit

Jesus told His disciples shortly before He was crucified that after He was gone, He would send the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, to teach them all things and guide them into all truth.¹

Everyone who receives Jesus as their Savior receives a measure of the Holy Spirit, but being filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit—what the Bible calls the “baptism” of the Holy Spirit²—is usually a separate experience that happens later.

If you haven’t already been filled with the Holy Spirit, you can be.³ You do it the same way you received salvation, by simply praying and asking God for it. “If you ... know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”⁴

3. Pray for the gift

At the time someone receives the Holy Spirit, they often receive the gift of prophecy—the ability to hear God’s Words directly—or one or more of the other gifts of the Spirit like speaking in tongues or healing, even though they may not realize it or understand it yet.⁵ The Holy Spirit gives us the gift of prophecy, and sometimes we receive it automatically when we pray for the Holy Spirit; other times we don’t, and we have to ask for it specifically. So if

¹ John 16:7,13–14.

² Mark 1:7-8.

³ For more on what it means to receive salvation (accept Jesus as your Savior) and to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and to appreciate the wonderful change that these experiences can bring about in your life forever, don’t miss *God’s Gifts!* from this series.

⁴ Luke 11:13.

⁵ See the list in 1 Corinthians 12.

you didn't receive the gift of prophecy when you prayed for the Holy Spirit, or you aren't sure, then you should pray and specifically ask the Lord for the gift of prophecy. Jesus promises that "Whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."¹ He's more than willing to give you whatever gifts of the Spirit you ask for, including the gift of hearing His voice directly.

4. Talk to Jesus

Prayer is not as complicated or as formal as a lot of people think. It's not meant to be a religious ritual, but a living relationship. Jesus wants to speak to you as openly and freely as a best friend or spouse would, but it's a two-way street. It may be awkward at first if you aren't used to speaking to Him personally, but it gets easier once you begin to do it regularly.

You may have difficulty praying, because you feel the things you have to say to Jesus won't be acceptable to Him, or that He won't understand. But remember that the Bible says that when Jesus was on Earth, He was tempted, or tested, in *all* the very same things we are.² So you can rest assured that He's heard and seen *everything!* He understands and loves you as no other can. He wants you to tell Him your deepest thoughts, your innermost feelings, and your secret dreams and longings.

¹ Mark 11:24.

² Hebrews 4:15.

5. Jesus or God?

One question that might come to your mind is when you pray or try to hear from Heaven, should you pray to God, or to Jesus, or both? Does it make any difference? In the Bible, Jesus said “I and My Father are One,”¹ but at the same time they are Father and Son. This is one of the mysteries of the spirit that we can’t quite grasp or comprehend with our mortal minds. But since they are one in spirit, you can talk to either one, and your prayers are sure to be heard and answered.

Since Jesus came to Earth and lived as one of us, He is closer to us in some ways. He understands us better, having experienced being a human on Earth. In reference to Jesus, the Bible tells us that “we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”² He has stood where you’re standing.

The Bible describes Jesus as our intercessor before God: “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”³ What this means is you can talk to God, in the name of Jesus, or you can talk directly to Jesus. You can also hear from either one in prophecy, although experience has shown that it is generally more common for those with the gift of prophecy to hear from Jesus than from God the Father.

¹ John 10:30.

² Hebrews 4:15.

³ Hebrews 7:25.

6. Read God's Word

In order to correctly apply the words that Jesus speaks to you personally in prophecy, you need a certain understanding of God's already recorded Word. The Bible is your foundation.¹

7. Have faith

This one may seem a bit more abstract or difficult than the others, but it's really not so hard. What is faith? The Bible tells us that faith is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it right now.² It is believing in God and His power, even though you can't actually see them.

How do you get faith? Simple: Faith comes from reading the Word of God.³ Reading about all the times God has spoken to His children in the past, as well as becoming familiar with His many promises to speak directly to you, will strengthen your faith that you can hear from Heaven. In fact, it will strengthen your faith for *anything* God wants you to do.

¹ For more on God's Word and prayer—how to do it, its power and effect, and how to implement it in your life—you'll find "Understanding God's Word" and "Prayer Power," in this series, to be a great help.

² Hebrews 11:1.

³ Romans 10:17.

8. Ask!

This may seem pretty obvious, but in order to receive something in prophecy from the Lord, you first have to ask Him to speak to you. Knowing that He can speak to you should increase your faith that when you ask, you will receive His answer loud and clear. He has promised, “Call on Me, and I will show you great and mighty things which you do not know.”¹ So place your call and get His reply!

9. Be humble

Your bearing—your mindset, your attitude of heart, your motives—helps determine how clearly you will be able to hear from Heaven. One of the Lord’s prerequisites for receiving His Words is that you come humbly before Him. You need to realize that you are weak in yourself, that you don’t have the answers and therefore need Him. The Bible says, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels”—lowly clay pots—“that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.”² You have to be willing to consider yourself as not knowing much at all, like an empty pot waiting to be filled. And after He speaks, you must remember to give Him all the credit and all the praise. It’s *His* power, *His* gift, not yours.

¹ Jeremiah 33:3.

² 2 Corinthians 4:7.

10. Ask God to overcome or overrule your own will and thoughts while hearing from Him

To receive God's messages, you need to be *receptive*. You need to have an open mind and heart. You need to be ready to accept whatever He gives, even if it's not what you were expecting, not completely to your liking, or you don't understand it fully.

If you're asking Him for the answer to a problem, but already have a set opinion or know what you want, God can still get His message through clearly if you're willing to put your own desires aside in order to hear what He has to say. It's only natural to have personal opinions and desires, but you must ask the Lord to block them out for the time being and clear your mind of your preconceived ideas, in order to get His opinion and find out what *He* wants.

Once you have asked the Lord to do that, you can have faith that what you receive is from Him. If it supports your previous position, you'll be encouraged that you were on the right track and can proceed with His blessing. If it's different, you'll soon find out that His wisdom in the matter is vastly superior to your own. Your idea may have been good, but His will prove better.

Pray for the gift of prophecy! Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God has always spoken; to lead, guide, comfort, encourage, and correct His children. You, too, can hear His voice every day! The apostle Paul said, “I would that you *all* prophesied” (1 Corinthians 14:5).

—D.B.B.



“Stir up the gift of God which is in you” (2 Timothy 1:6). “Do not neglect the gift that is in you” (1 Timothy 4:14). You have to exercise your gift, you have to use it. Like any exercise, it takes effort on your part. It takes something out of you, but it’s always worth it!

—D.B.B.



We know what is true or false by the standards of God’s Word. The [written] Word is our foundation, our guide, our standard, and the rod of measurement whereby we measure all things, even the words that God gives us today [through prophecy]. It’s the Bureau of Standards by which we measure all truth and all error!

—D.B.B.

Getting Started

As with anything else, getting started isn't always easy, and the hardest part for most people is learning to *let go*. You have to be willing to let go of any preconceived ideas you may have and to open your mind and heart to the Lord's thoughts and the ways of His Spirit, which are different from your own.

Hearing from the Lord requires putting your natural senses and your own thoughts on hold. The first step is believing that there is a spiritual realm, and that Someone there wants to communicate with you. The second is being willing to put aside what your natural senses tell you and sometimes even what "common sense" tells you, in favor of what God wants to tell you.

Once you take those first two steps, you're ready to begin in earnest! Start by finding a quiet place and taking a few minutes to talk to the Lord. Tell Him what's on your heart. Tell Him how much He means to you. Thank Him for His love. Thank Him for all the good things He has done in your life. Count your blessings. God loves for you to praise

Him. “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.”¹

Perhaps you have a specific question you’d like to ask Jesus. Go ahead and ask Him. Specific prayers get specific answers. Or, perhaps you don’t have anything in particular on your mind, but are curious to find out what He might have to say to you. Either way, once you’ve told Him why you want to hear from Him, be still and focus your mind on the Lord. Closing your eyes will help you shut out the sights around you, which can be distracting.

Now do your best to concentrate and listen with your spirit. Getting still and waiting is a manifestation of your faith. It shows that you believe your Creator loves you and will answer you. It’s during this time of quiet, as you wait before the Lord in reverence, quietness, humility, and patience, that He can speak to you.

Sometimes God may speak by bringing to mind a verse or passage from the Bible that you have read or memorized before. This verse, when applied to the particular situation or decision you are faced with, can be the clear and simple answer that you seek.

At other times, the Lord may speak a new message that you’ve never heard before—words that He’s never spoken exactly that way to anyone else. The wording of the message may sound rather formal, or it may be in simple, everyday language. The Lord can express Himself any way He likes on any subject, but He usually speaks to us each in the way that we will have the easiest time receiving and relating to.

¹ Psalm 100:4.

So take in whatever comes to your heart mind, or ears, and accept that as the Lord's message for you. It's sort of like giving a running translation: you "hear" one phrase or sentence at a time. As you speak or write down or record that first bit, the Lord will give you more. Each time you repeat what He has told you, it shows you believe that message was from the Lord. It's a demonstration of your faith, which pleases Him.

It's easy to dismiss this little inner voice as being your own thoughts, especially when you are first starting to hear from the Lord, but it's important that you accept that this is Him speaking to you. When you've sincerely asked the Lord to speak, He will. And when He does, you must accept what He says as being from Him. "Ask and it will be given you."¹ God fills the spiritually hungry with good things.² This is where faith is so important, because faith helps you believe God's promises that when you call out to Him, you will receive an answer.

Try not to think about, analyze, scrutinize, or judge the message as it is coming; just accept it and thank God for it.

You may feel any one of a number of emotions while receiving a message from the Lord. Some people feel a surge of excitement or euphoria, some feel nervous, some break down and cry, some burst out laughing—but many feel nothing unusual at all. Some may feel something one time, and nothing at other times. Whether you *feel* something or not doesn't make the message you receive more or less valid. "We walk by faith, and not by sight"—and certainly not by feelings!¹

¹ Matthew 7:7.

² Luke 1:53.

Don't necessarily expect to receive a long, eloquent message from God the very first time you get quiet and ask Him to speak, although that can happen. Usually with time and experience, as you exercise your gift of prophecy, the messages you receive from the Lord will be more detailed and more complete. So keep practicing. Don't give up!

Don't be discouraged if you start out with a "baby" gift of prophecy and only get a phrase or two, or a Bible verse, when you were hoping for something longer. Don't let that stop you! Be encouraged that you did hear *something*. As you keep trying, you'll most likely receive more. Practice makes perfect!

Remember also that a message from Heaven doesn't have to be lengthy to be good. There are times that the Lord can give you the answer you are seeking in just one sentence. Of course it's good to wait and see if He has any more to say before going about your business, but if you feel that He has finished talking, then thank Him and trust that those words contain the answer you were seeking.

Or perhaps you were too distracted by other thoughts while praying to hear anything at all. Don't worry. It's tough to concentrate sometimes, and the Lord understands our human frailties and weaknesses. This is new to you, and the simple fact that you're trying is a sign of progress. Keep it up!

Try to take a few minutes each day to pray and praise the Lord. Follow this with your "question of the day" and a few moments of listening for His voice. As you get in the habit of exercising your gift, it will become easier and easier to receive the Lord's Words.

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:7.

If you continue to strengthen your faith by reading God's written Word, and if you continue to earnestly desire this gift of His Spirit, the Lord won't fail you. God has promised to speak to you, and He won't let you down as long as you are doing your part.

It's easy to get answers from the Lord: You just have to have faith. When you ask the Lord for an answer, *expect* an answer and take the first thing that comes. If you really believe and ask the Lord, and you want to hear or see, you won't be disappointed. That thing you see or hear with the eyes or ears of your spirit, that's the Lord. Just open up your heart and let the sunshine in! "This is the problem, Lord! What are we going to do about it?" If you're desperate and ask Him, He'll answer!

—D.B.B.



Shutting your eyes helps you to see in the spirit and to become unconscious of the things and people around you. It helps you get your mind on the Lord and in a relaxed position, where nothing distracts you.

—D.B.B.



He's a living God, a speaking God!—One who still loves His children, who still speaks to them. You can hear from God every day. Every day should be a new experience, a new listening to the voice of the Lord.

—D.B.B.



It's important to be specific with the Lord when you ask Him for guidance, and you should expect specific answers. Being specific is a sign of your faith. It shows you really expect a specific answer, or you wouldn't be so specific!

—D.B.B.

A baby is such an illustration of faith and hearing from God. When he's crying for his mother, you wouldn't think of refusing him. That little baby has more faith than you do sometimes, 'cause when the baby cries, he expects someone to hear him. Because he knows—God put it in him to know—that if he calls, you'll answer. He expects the answer and he gets it!

After the nipple is in the baby's mouth, he automatically starts nursing. When you cry out to God for something, He pushes it in your mouth; but if you don't start sucking, you'll never get it. You have to have the faith to begin to pull. A lot of times he has to suck for a couple of minutes before he gets something. His sucking is like the action of faith.

What is it that brings the milk out of the breast? It's a vacuum! The baby deliberately, when he sucks, creates a vacuum inside his mouth, which pulls the milk out. You have to create a vacuum inside your heart: "Lord, here is this empty space—You fill it!"

Do you know what really fills that vacuum? It's not actually the child. All the child does is create the vacuum by reducing the pressure inside his mouth, and so the milk flows out from the mother's breast into his mouth. In prayer, you create a vacuum. There's a space that needs filling; you seek the Lord's help. You create the vacuum, and it is the Lord's pressure that fills it. The power really comes from outside, not from inside. All you did was create the vacuum, but that vacuum drew the power.

—D.B.B.

Practical Applications

Some people say, “There *are* no practical uses for prophecy in this day and age.” Fortunately for us, they’re wrong! Their lack of faith causes them to miss out on the spiritual treasures God would like to give them if they’d only believe. That’s sad, but that doesn’t mean *you* need to miss out too. All He requires is that you ask of Him in faith. “Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.”¹

The practical uses for prophecy are endless. The Lord can fill any need, answer any question, provide any solution, untangle any mess, resolve any conflict. You just need to give Him a chance. If you sincerely try to *do* what He tells you to do, if you carry out His advice, you can be assured it will *work*. You’ll never regret having listened to Him! Granted, you may not see perfect results immediately, and sometimes you may never know exactly how a certain situation was helped by your listening to the Lord. However, if you let Him lead in your life, you can’t go wrong! You can trust that He will stick to His

¹ John 16:24.

Word. He will give you just what you need and what He knows will help you most in the long run.

The Lord wants us to involve Him in every area of our lives, and to let Him help us make choices and decisions, big and small. Consider this example:

Jan and Bill are married. Jan is visiting her aunt and uncle in a town several hours from where she and Bill live. It's Friday, and she's already been there for a week.

She calls Bill to see how things are going at home, and Bill assures her that everything is just great. Jan mentions that her aunt has invited her to stay for two more days, and Bill says he and the kids can manage for a couple more days, no problem. Jan hangs up, but before making her final decision and telling her aunt that she will stay longer, she goes to her room and asks Jesus to confirm this plan.

In a gentle voice, the Lord tells Jan, "It would be better if you returned home now. Though Bill and the children seem to be doing fine and Bill said they could manage for a few more days, they're going to need you there on the weekend."

Jan has only recently developed the habit of asking for the Lord's counsel regarding her personal decisions, so she's a little shaky. She asks the Lord for more, and He brings a Scripture to mind. "In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."¹ Since that is exactly what she has just done in asking Him about her plans, this verse gives her faith that the first answer she got about returning now was indeed the Lord's voice.

So she ends her visit as she had originally planned, and returns home that night. Saturday begins as usual. Bill mows the lawn and Jan does a

¹ Proverbs 3:6.

little spring cleaning while the kids play. Jan wonders momentarily if she made a mistake in returning home when she did, as it seems that Bill and the kids and the house would have survived the weekend without her. She reminds herself that her decision to return was based on God's leading, and continues her chores.

After lunch the telephone rings. It's Bill's employer. A crisis has arisen that requires Bill's immediate attention. Five minutes after he receives the news, Bill kisses Jan and the kids goodbye as he hurries out the door.

Now it all becomes clear: If Jan had been at her aunt and uncle's, several hours away, Bill would have been in quite a fix. Their neighbors are all away, so there would have been no one to look after the kids. Jan thanks God for His loving, wise guidance. He hadn't told her *what* emergency would arise, but He had showed her which would be the better of two seemingly equal choices.

Divine guidance can make a difference in almost any situation, big or small, that you might face in life. Without the Lord, you might get it right part of the time or most of the time, but He can get it right *every* time. Prophecy will be an invaluable tool when you're faced with major questions or complex problems, but you'll also find that He can help you in seemingly small matters, as well. He's always around, and He's always happy to help. Why not avail yourself of His words of wisdom—the best “professional help” available anywhere today?

Maybe your business is in trouble and you aren't sure what move to make next. Maybe you're having trouble getting along with your boss or your employees. Maybe you're having marriage or rela-

tionship problems. Maybe your work and personal relationships are going fine, but you just don't see where your life is taking you or what your priorities and goals should be.

If you have children, there will always be plenty of things you don't understand and need heavenly insight about! One of your children might be slow in learning to read, one might have a bed-wetting problem, one might not make friends easily. Maybe your oldest has just entered adolescence and suddenly you two can't seem to communicate anymore. There are plenty of books that could be of some help in these mini-crises, and you can always turn to more experienced parents, teachers, or counselors for advice, but why not also ask the One who created your children and knows their needs better than anyone?

Perhaps you're going on a business trip, and there are several alternatives for arranging your itinerary. Maybe you're planning a move to another city, or considering a career change. Maybe you're not sure when would be the best time to take your vacation, or where to go.

If any of these scenarios sound familiar, take them as opportunities to tap into the wisdom of your all-seeing, all-knowing, and all-powerful God. He knows what's ahead, and what will be the best for you and make you happiest. He can also protect you from accidents and harm by steering you clear of them, if you will check your plans with Him ahead of time and follow His directions.

It may feel a little awkward at first, putting the Lord smack in the center of your daily life, with all its joys, sorrows, difficulties, and hard choices, but that's exactly where He belongs and wants to be!

Pretty soon you'll wonder how you ever made a decision without Him.

One of the main principles involved in reaching a decision is: Don't start talking—pray! Prayer is not just speaking your piece to God, but letting God speak His, too, and waiting until He answers. If you do, He'll tell you what you're supposed to do. Take time to hear from God, and He'll take the time to straighten out the problem.

—D.B.B.



Noah [in the Bible] must have spent lots of time hearing from the Lord, or he couldn't have gotten all those directions on how to build the ark! Remember, he'd never even seen a boat that size before! God probably gave him the exact specifications for every inch of the ark!

—D.B.B.



When the Lord gives you the gift of prophecy, it's for a purpose. He expects you to use it to get His direction when the answer to your specific question or problem is not in the Word. Then you must be willing to do things His way, because only He knows what to do.

It's not a heavy burden to ask Him for answers and direction. To the contrary, it's wonderful, liberating, life-changing, marvelous, and amazing that He speaks to us directly and personally, answering our questions and giving us His counsel and encouragement and comfort, opening up to us the secrets of hearts and situations. Hear from Him today, and you'll be so happy—and so will He!

—*Maria David*

Jesus can give you personalized instruction for any situation that comes up. He knows what you're going through, and He can and wants to give you what you need—answers to your questions, direction when you don't know what to do, comfort when you feel like you can't go on, courage to be a witness when you're afraid, solutions to personnel conflicts that seem beyond repair, the encouragement you need to do His will when you're struggling with a difficult decision, and the supernatural strength that comes only when you lean on Him and find His strength. All of this and more is at your disposal if you'll just take your problems, trials, needs, and questions to Jesus!

—*Maria David*

Basic Operating Instructions

When you buy a new power tool or household appliance, it usually comes with operating and safety instructions. At first glance your new gadget may look relatively easy to operate, but when you look at the written instructions you often discover some features you weren't aware of. It gives a few tips for maintenance that will keep your new tool or appliance in top working condition, and it lists some safety points that may not have occurred to you.

Receiving the gift of prophecy is like receiving a new spiritual power tool. There are a few things you really should know about it before you try to use it.

Choosing the time and place

If you're going to get things from the Lord, you need to choose a quiet place, as free from distractions as possible. It's still possible to hear from Heaven if there are outside noises like children's rowdy play, other people talking loudly in a nearby

room, or traffic or construction in the street, but it's harder to concentrate.

In the hustle and bustle of a busy day, it's hard to find even a moment of peace and quiet, and once your day begins, you may find it hard to stop for this type of quiet time—not to mention finding a place where it's quiet. And of course the best time to find out what you're supposed to do each day is before the day starts. Those are three good reasons for taking your time with the Lord first thing in the morning. You might not always be able to do that, and even when you do, other things may come up later in the day that require you to stop and get God's new perspective, but that's the ideal.

Get comfortable

Your body doesn't have to be in any certain position to pray and hear from the Lord. Whatever position makes it easiest for you to concentrate and receive the Lord's Words is best. It also helps if you aren't too hot or cold, tired, hungry, or thirsty. Any of these circumstances might distract you, so take care of them first if you can.

However, you can't always wait until the circumstances are just right in order to take time to hear from the Lord. If you wait until the setting is perfect, you might never get around to it. So if you need an answer right away, then stop wherever you are and ask Him. No matter what else is going on, you can still get a reply if you put forth the effort.

Clear your mind

Whether you're just beginning your day or stopping in the middle of it to hear from the Lord, you'll need to get in the mood. Sometimes it's difficult to get your work or other thoughts out of your mind, but it's important to ask the Lord to do that.

It often helps to spend a little time—it doesn't have to be more than a few minutes—reading the Word before you start. Keep a Bible and other devotional material handy for times like this. Sometimes it also helps to sing a song or two of praise to the Lord. If you can't or don't feel comfortable singing out loud, sing in your heart. "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise."¹

Praise, prayer, the Word, singing—all these can help clear your mind, quiet your spirit, and focus your full attention on the Lord. Find whatever works best for you.

Keep a record

When the Lord speaks to you, try to record His message in some way. If you have a tape recorder or dictaphone, you can repeat the words phrase by phrase as you receive them from the Lord. Or if you see a vision, you can describe it, in as much detail as possible, into the recorder. Or you can write or type the message as it comes. If you choose to write down your messages, you may want to keep a notebook especially for this purpose. Be sure to record the questions you ask the Lord, as well as His answers.

Recording the questions and messages makes it possible for you to review and study them later.

¹ Psalm 100:4.

Often people who hear from God don't remember the message clearly afterward, especially if it was a long or detailed one. Or even if they do remember the gist of what the Lord said, they can't remember exactly how He expressed it. It's often as though His Spirit bypasses your consciousness and puts the words right in your mouth if you're speaking them into a tape recorder, or pushes your hand along if you're writing them down or typing them as they come. So sometimes only if you recorded it will you know what the answer was.

Don't analyze

It's only natural to start thinking about what the Lord is saying once He starts—after all, that's why you asked Him to speak, so you could find out what He has to say. But if you start pondering or analyzing the message before He's finished, that will make it harder for you to keep receiving more. Your thoughts can drown out the Lord's voice. If you miss even a part of what the Lord has to say to you, you may miss something very special or important!

Recording the message as it comes helps you relax and just let it flow out, because you know every word will be there when you finish. After you have received His entire message, that's the time to reflect on what He said. Play it back or read it over, and really think about what the Lord told you.

It's also important to ask the Lord to help you correctly interpret or understand what He has said. Sometimes things don't turn out the way we think the Lord said they would, simply because we have *misunderstood* what He said. We think He said one thing, when actually He said something else.

For example, is He saying that it's His *best* that you to do a certain thing? Or is He saying that He will *allow* you to do it, if you want? Or is He saying that the course of action depends on your personal conviction, what you believe is right and best? Or is He saying very clearly that this is something that you *need* to do, or that you must do to avert problems or injury?

Every word counts: the way God expresses it, how He puts it. If you don't study it carefully and ask the Lord for the correct interpretation, you might miss a little shade of meaning or even misunderstand the message completely.

Also, don't be surprised if a message that seemed to be disjointed, unclear, or clumsily expressed while you were receiving it is in fact very complete, well-rounded, and even eloquently put. This is often the case, and is further proof that the message you received was indeed the Lord speaking, not just your own thoughts.

Look it up

Often the Lord speaks to us by bringing to mind a verse or passage from the written Word. If you haven't experienced this already, you will be surprised to discover how alive Scripture can be when the Lord applies it to you personally. Have a Bible handy, so you can look up the verse or story the Lord gave for your situation, if it's one you're not very familiar with. A Bible concordance—in print or on computer—can be a big help at times like this, and makes looking up specific verses or passages quick and easy.

The minute we begin to listen to the Lord's written Word, we put ourselves in the position of being willing to listen, so then the Lord begins to speak and give us His current Word of prophecy.

—D.B.B.



Lord, I have shut the door, speak now the word
Which in the din and throng could not be heard;
Hushed now my inner heart, whisper Thy will,
While I have come apart, while all is still.
Lord, I have shut the door, here do I bow;
Speak, for my soul attent turns to Thee now.
Rebuke Thou what is vain, counsel my soul,
Thy Holy will reveal, my will control.
In this blest quietness, clamorings cease;
Here in Thy presence dwells infinite peace;
Yonder the strife and cry, yonder, the sin:
Lord, I have shut the door, Thou art within!
Lord, I have shut the door, strengthen my heart;
Yonder awaits the task—I share a part.
Only through grace bestowed may I be true;
Here, while alone with Thee, my strength renew.

—William M. Runyan

God has just filled life full of puzzles and problems and mysteries and excitement and suspense to challenge our intellect, challenge our spirituality, challenge our faith, challenge our trust in the Lord, and to get us to want to find out the answers!

In trying to show us His will, He sometimes lays a mystifying puzzle before us. He sometimes speaks in riddles and mysteries that are hard to understand, but He almost always gives us the starting clue. Then He leads us on step by step. He likes for us to have to seek it. Because this is exercising our faith in Him and His Word and His divine guidance and magnanimity, His parental love.

—D.B.B.

Up Close and Personal

If you're anything like the rest of us, you sometimes get discouraged or experience mood swings—maybe even depression. Perhaps a loved one or close friend has passed on. Perhaps your troubles are mounting and friends are suddenly few and far between. Perhaps you've just been laid off from your job, or perhaps it happened months ago. Whatever your problem, heartache, or trial, Jesus wants to comfort you. He's a friend that sticks closer than a brother.¹ Even though Jesus is the Son of God, He experienced the same difficulties and feelings of disappointment that we do.² There's nothing He doesn't understand. Like an old hymn says:

When your heart is aching, turn to Jesus,
He's the dearest friend that you can know;
You will find Him standing close beside you,
Waiting peace and comfort to bestow.

¹ Proverbs 18:24.

² Hebrews 4:15.

Heartaches, take them all to Jesus;
Go to Him today, do it now without delay.
Heartaches, take them all to Jesus;
He will take your heartaches all away.

The Bible says that God is near to the broken-hearted.¹ He's more than a shoulder to cry on or a hand to hold. He can reach into the deepest places of your heart. He can soothe the pain and suffering, and replace it with His love, peace, comfort, and yes, even joy. He can do all this through His Words. When He shines the light of His Word on your tears, they turn to rainbow hues. It's sunshine after the rain, light at the end of the tunnel.

Jesus loves you dearly. He wants to express that love to you personally, but He can't unless you let Him. He wants to help you understand why He has allowed certain difficulties to befall you, but He needs you to listen. He wants to help you understand why you're feeling the way you are, and to tell you what you can do about it, but you need to *want* His answers. In your most trying times, His Word—His written Word and His living Word in prophecy—will come alive in your heart if you reach out and receive it.

¹ Psalm 34:18.

The Lord wants to be your personal shepherd, or counselor. (See *Psalms* 23.) When you feel alone, when you need a shoulder to cry on, someone to understand, a word of sympathy and encouragement, He is always available!

—*Maria David*



Jesus will never run out of things to say! He will thrill you again and again with new revelations, fresh illustrations and word pictures, increasingly tender words of love, specific detailed instruction, and more! It just flows and flows and flows—as abundant as the ocean! Why settle for just a little “wee drop” when you can dive in and swim and revel in the refreshing, delicious water of His living Word for you personally?

—*Maria David*



I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses,
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses.
And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.

—*C. Austin Miles*

The Gift that Keeps on Giving

As you experience the wonderful benefits of hearing from Heaven, you'll no doubt want to share this gift with your friends, loved ones, and acquaintances. Once you're convinced of God's ability to speak to you—to give you down-to-earth, practical, workable solutions to the problems and challenges of life, and to provide comfort and encouragement when you're low—you will realize that your gift could help others as well.

There are so many broken hearts and wounded spirits in the world today! Chances are you know someone who is passing through a difficult time, or struggling to recover from a recent tragedy. At times like these, nothing could be a greater encouragement than a personal message from the Lord, in which He expresses His love and gives comfort as only He can. After all, He knows them and their heart better than anyone. So in addition to flowers or a card, why not ask Jesus to give you a message from Heaven which you can pass on to that person who is going through a crisis?

God is available to anyone who sincerely seeks Him. He isn't exclusive, He isn't choosy, He doesn't play favorites. He could just as easily speak directly to your friend and loved one if they would only believe and put forth the effort. But often when people are at their lowest, God seems farthest away. Even if they know the Lord, they often feel unworthy of His speaking to them, or even of His love. Or maybe they feel forsaken by Him because of the difficulties they face. They need someone to channel God's love to them—maybe *you*. Once they are touched by God's love through a message you receive for them, perhaps their faith to reach out to God themselves will be rekindled.

It's not always easy to receive a message from the Lord for others. It takes a lot of courage. What if they think you just made it up, or that you're a bit strange for thinking you could actually hear from God? Well, you don't need to worry about what people will think. Jesus said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me."¹ If they are at all open to the Holy Spirit, it will work in their hearts and the Lord's Words will have a positive effect on their lives. Then they will believe. Besides, it's not *your* reputation that's at stake, but God's, and He is perfectly capable of defending His own reputation.

When you receive a message from Heaven for someone else, it's simply your job to receive it and pass it on. It's a bit like being one of those old-fashioned telegraph operators: you're just the link, and once you've passed the message on, it's up to the recipient to *receive* it. If they accept His Words, even if they wonder about them a little at first, then they

¹ John 12:32.

will benefit from the comfort, peace, solutions, or whatever other help God is trying to give them.

When they do, they may very well come back to *you* with a heart full of gratitude. You were the conveyor of God's message and love, so they may feel indebted to you. If they don't understand how prophecy works, they may try to give *you* the credit for this wonderful manifestation of God's power. You know you were just the receptacle to catch His words, you know it was nothing great that *you* did, but they may not. This is when you need to re-direct all praise and glory to God. Make it clear to them that you're just the messenger, and thank God with them that He was able to speak to them, even if it was through a weak, lowly, "earthen vessel"—you.

"Every good and perfect gift comes down from *above*."¹ Patting yourself on the back for the good that results from your gift is the quickest way to lose that gift. However, if you continue to remind yourself of God's greatness and your own weakness and fallibility, you'll find great fulfillment and satisfaction in knowing you were a "vessel fit for the Master's use."²

If you use your gift to help others, the Lord will bless you and help it to grow even more. Prophecy is not meant as some sort of divination rod to use only for your personal gain, or to just find answers to questions you're curious about. Rather it's a tool to help you develop a closer relationship with the Lord, and to draw closer to Him, and to be a better Christian and a better witness of His love to others. Yes, it is to help you make wiser, sounder decisions in your personal life, as well as in your business and

¹ James 1:17.

² 2 Timothy 2:21.

family situations. But it's also to help others in some way— either through receiving messages for them, or by helping you, through the instruction God gives you personally, to be a better example of God's love and Word to them. The more you pour out to others, the more the Lord will give you in return.

Let God love others through you. Your life will then be blessed with the satisfaction that you are not only cultivating a personal relationship with God, but that you are also helping others come to know Him better.

We need to always remember that our spiritual gifts make us servants of others. A gift from the Lord such as the gift of prophecy makes us obligated to others, to use it for their help and edification. It's like the Lord's parable about the talents. (See *Matthew 25:14–30*.) They're a serious responsibility and He wants to make sure we put them to good use helping others, not just hide them away because we're embarrassed or afraid of what people will think. It's a serious, humbling responsibility to have such gifts.

—*Maria David*

General Maintenance

Follow these simple maintenance tips to keep your new “power tool” in tip-top condition:

Practice regularly

“Use it or lose it,” as the adage goes. In order to maintain your gift, you’ve got to use it frequently. Make it a habit. Faith is like a muscle: the more you use it, the stronger it becomes. Every time you ask God to speak to you and you receive His message, it demonstrates that you have faith in the process. The more you exercise your gift, the more your faith will grow, and the easier it will become.

Read the Word

It takes *faith* to hear from God, and that faith comes from God’s Word.

As you practice using your gift, your confidence in it will grow. You’ll get over the uncertainty you felt at first, wondering if it would actually work. That’s wonderful, but it can also be dangerous. If you’re

not careful, you can begin to think you don't need to read your Bible anymore—after all, you're getting it “straight from the horse's mouth.” But that's not so! Jesus once likened God's Word to “treasures new and old.”¹ You need *both*, and you need to find the proper balance.

Here's an analogy: Consider prophecy and the written Word as two basic food groups—say, carbohydrates and protein. Eating only one or the other wouldn't benefit your body nearly as much as the two combined in a balanced diet.

You also need a knowledge of the written Word in order to confirm the words you personally receive from Heaven, and that knowledge comes from regular reading and study. The Bible is the handbook of the heavenly Department of Weights and Measures, which gives the specifications by which you can measure the messages you receive. God won't tell you anything contrary to what He has said in the Bible, but don't be surprised if He fills in lots of gaps. In fact, that's one of the main purposes of prophecy: to fill in the gaps, and to apply the spiritual principles of the Bible to you personally in this day and age.

Some things either just aren't covered in the Bible, or aren't covered in enough detail, or the application might not be clear in the context of today's world. For example, if you're wondering whether you should travel somewhere by plane or by car, you won't find a verse in the Bible that specifically tells you which of those two methods of transportation you should use, since they didn't exist at that time. However, the Lord might bring to your mind a verse about going slow or fast. Or, He might just

¹ Matthew 13:52.

give you a more specific answer in prophecy, using today's terminology.

In less obvious matters, it takes wisdom to know when you should apply what the Bible says literally, and when the Lord intends for you to adapt it to your situation. The good news is, He has promised you that wisdom: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."¹

Fellowship with other believers

Whether you are a new Christian or simply new at hearing from the Lord, you will benefit greatly from fellowship with other Christians who have faith in God, as well as faith in this particular gift of the Spirit. As you start out exercising your own gift of prophecy, the counsel and support of other people with faith, as well as their knowledge of the written Word, will help you balance and benefit from the messages you receive. However, if you aren't able to have fellowship and interaction with other believers, remember that God is not limited; He can still speak to you, if you're willing to listen.

Stay utterly dependent on the Lord

Hearing from God takes work. It takes effort. It takes a certain amount of desperation of spirit. Jesus promises that if you ask, seek, and knock, you will receive and find, and the things of His Spirit will be opened to you.² But He doesn't say all those things will be delivered to you on a silver platter, with no

¹ James 1:5.

² Matthew 7:7.

effort on your part. Don't get complacent about it, but acknowledge how much you need the Lord, what a privilege it is to hear from Him, and stay eager in spirit to receive His answers.

Avoiding the Pitfalls

Yes, there are pitfalls, but they can be avoided with a little caution and prayer. Here are some of the most common ones, along with a few tried-and-proven tips.

Wanting the credit

The first thing to watch out for is pride. As you begin to benefit from the messages you receive from Heaven, it's a natural temptation to want to take part of the credit to yourself. After all, these wonderful words or pictures are coming through *you*, aren't they? Certainly you must deserve at least a little special honor or recognition because of your ability to receive such messages from the Lord!

The words *are* coming through you and it *is* an honor to receive them, but this doesn't make you any better than anyone else. It's not of your *own* doing, it's the *Lord's* power coming through! As Jesus said, "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ... Without Me you can do nothing."¹

¹ John 15:4-5.

Remind yourself of that constantly. Give credit where credit is due. Pray and strive to be humble in spirit, and give God *all* the glory, regardless of how wonderfully God sees fit to speak through you.

“When you pray,” Jesus once told His followers, “don’t be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Well, they have their reward. Instead, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”¹ And the same goes for prophesying.

Entering into your “secret place,” whether it’s your room, office, or backyard, is a key to successfully hearing from the Lord. You’ve got to get away from it all, in attitude as well as body. You shouldn’t “advertise” that you’re about to hear from Heaven. That doesn’t mean you have to keep it a big secret. There will be times when you should tell others about your gift, or share some of the messages you’ve received so that they can also be encouraged, but bragging about your gift of prophecy will often result in the blessing stopping there.

Also be careful that you don’t become so familiar with this supernatural gift that you get laid back, or take it for granted. The Bible says, “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”² After you have heard from the Lord regularly for some time, you may grow overly-confident in yourself. After all, it’s easy enough now that you have the hang of it, you think. That can also lead to start thinking that maybe it’s *you* after all, or that you’re something special since you hear from the Lord so easily. Remember, it’s not in you; it’s just Jesus through you.

¹ Matthew 6:5–6.

² 1 Corinthians 10:12.

Failure to measure your messages against the written Word.

If you don't check your messages against the written Word, you're much more likely to go astray. Imagine that you are weaving a large and intricate tapestry. You've been given detailed written instructions, and as long as you follow those, the pattern comes out perfect. But if you decide you no longer need the instructions, you miss a thread here and a thread there, and the pattern gets messed up. The mistake may be so small that at first it's hardly noticeable, but if you don't stop and fix it and go back to following the instructions, you'll end up with a horribly distorted picture.

Failure to check your messages against the written Word is often the result of depending too much on prophecy for guidance, to the neglect of the written Word. Another reason for not checking what you receive against the Bible is that it takes time, especially if you don't know the Bible well. It's *work* to pray and look for similar situations in the Bible that confirm or support the messages you receive, but it's well worth it. If you are faithful to read and study your Bible a little each day, it will get easier and easier—and it will be there when you need it!

Other men and women of faith can also be of great assistance to you in helping you to apply and balance the words you receive from Heaven. The Bible says, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every thought shall be established,"¹ and, "In the multitude of counselors there is safety."²

¹ Matthew 18:16.

² Proverbs 11:14.

The Hinderer

We can't ignore the facts. The Devil and his evil spirits exist, and they oppose God's children every chance they get. The last thing the Devil wants is for God's children to establish a personal link with their Savior. He knows how much good the gift of prophecy can accomplish, and he's not happy that you've discovered it.

We don't need to fear the Devil or his forces, though, because Jesus is greater than they are.¹ Nevertheless, the Bible warns us to not be ignorant of the Devil's tactics.²

If you feel barraged by distractions every time you try to hear from God, it's probably the Devil or one of his spiritual agents trying to clog your channel to Heaven, to jam the spiritual airwaves with static so you can't tune in to God's station and receive the message He is beaming your way. If you feel this is happening, you can put into practice the verse "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you."³ Some ways you can do this and clear your mind of

¹ 1 John 4:4.

² 2 Corinthians 2:11.

³ James 4:7.

distracting thoughts are to sing a devotional song, or read some Scripture promises aloud. If you're worrying about something, it can help to commit it to the Lord in prayer. Then, once you've done that, you can safely leave your worries in God's hands, and focus on His message for you.

It's always a good idea to put the messages that you and others receive from Heaven to the test. Jesus said, "By their fruits you will know them."¹ The messages that God gives are scriptural, edifying, instructive, encouraging, and uplifting. They result in the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.² Even when God corrects or scolds, He gives us hope and makes us feel loved, like a father encouraging his children. If the words you receive from Heaven bring about any or all of these benefits in your life or the lives of others, then you can be assured that they are indeed words from Heaven.

If you love the Lord and are sincere in your desire to hear from Him, if you pray earnestly for Him to help you stay on track, and if you are fulfilling His basic requirements to the best of your ability, then you can rest assured that you're hearing from Him. You can continue to ask Him to speak to you, and have full confidence that He will. When the heart is right, the rest will be right too.³

One of your best defenses against the Devil's static when you're trying to receive God's signals is to try to minimize the Devil's input at *all* times. He and his forces are quite active in the world today.

¹ Matthew 7:20.

² Galatians 5:22–23.

³ 1 John 3:21–22.

It's apparent everywhere you look, from advertisements to television to the Internet. Not everything you see and hear through mass media is of the Devil, of course, but he gets plenty of press and air-time. Just as God's Word inspires our faith in God and His ways, the Devil's propaganda pulls us his way. You may not realize it at the time, but that negative input has an effect on your spirit.

It's like the old saying, "You are what you eat." Just as you are what you eat, physically, you are what you read and watch and listen to, spiritually. The more of the Devil's propaganda you take in, the further you will drift from the Lord and His Word, and the harder it will be for you to receive God's messages. If you're not sure about some of the things you take in throughout the day, ask yourself, "What effect does it have on me?"

What to Do About Doubts

One of the Devil's primary goals, of course, is to convince you that you can't hear from God and that it was a mistake for you to even try in the first place. Refuse to listen to or accept such lies!¹ The only way the Devil could possibly rob you of God's gift is if you surrender it to him—so don't!

The Devil will do everything he can to get you to doubt. First he'll try to convince you that there's no such thing as hearing from Heaven. Then if that doesn't work, he'll try to convince you that you're too sinful, too shallow, or carnal to receive anything from Heaven. His ultimate goal is to get you to lose faith in God altogether.

Of course the Devil doesn't always come out with obvious lies like, "There is no God." He usually begins with little questions which raise little doubts, and his questions seem so *reasonable*. He takes advantage of our earthbound natural reasoning—our "carnal mind," as it is referred to in the Bible—which is simply unable to understand God or the workings of His Spirit. How could we ever understand

¹ James 4:7.

the infinite God with our finite, little minds? “The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”¹ “As the heavens are higher than the Earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”²

How can we rationalize receiving messages from a God that we can't see, in a manner that defies our natural senses? We can't! We just have to accept it and believe it by faith, because God says that's the way it is. If God has chosen to speak to His children through prophecy, or by any other means for that matter, who are we to question Him? God doesn't appear before our eyes, nor does He often give obvious physical manifestations of His presence or power. If He did, we wouldn't need faith, and would miss out on the blessings He wants to give us for choosing to walk by faith. “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”³

How do we walk by faith? By staying full of the Word. As we said earlier, “Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.”⁴ There's only one way to find the faith you need to partake of this special and supernatural gift: Read, absorb, believe, and act on God's Word.

Faith is also the opposite of doubt. So the heavier the attacks of doubt, the more time you should spend absorbing the Word. Feed your faith, and starve your doubts. Let the light in, and the darkness will flee!

¹ 1 Corinthians 2:14.

² Isaiah 55:9.

³ John 20:29.

⁴ Romans 10:17.

The way to rid yourself of his doubts is to refuse to listen to them! Give no place to the Devil!¹ Take a tip from Jesus: Answer the Devil's doubts with Scripture, "It is written!"²

For example, if the Devil says, "God's not going to speak through sinful *you*, of all people," you can answer, "It is written, 'Ask and it shall be given ...'"³

Even after you understand and accept this basic explanation of prophecy, you may very well have questions from time to time. Sincere questions about prophecy—or any other work of God's Spirit—are different than doubts. Questions only become doubts when you refuse to accept the answers that God gives in His Word or through prophecy itself. It's good to get your questions resolved by taking them to the Lord and asking Him to explain, or searching for the answers in God's Word yourself, or talking with those who are well versed in God's Word.

You can't ignore or suppress either your questions or doubts, and pretend they're not there. But neither can you resolve them by natural reasoning. You'll only think yourself into a bigger muddle. You must ask Jesus. He has all the answers, and He will give them to you if you take your questions to Him in a sincere, humble, open spirit. He'll either give the answers to you directly, through prophecy, or He'll help you find them in His Word, or He'll use others to help you find them.

Don't be ashamed to confess your doubts and fears to other Christians who have strong faith in the areas where yours is weak. Of course it won't do

¹ Ephesians 4:27.

² Matthew 4:1–11.

³ Luke 11:9.

you any good to discuss your questions and doubts with others who share those same questions and doubts; you'll only drag each other down even more. But those who have strong faith built on a foundation of God's Word can be a big help to you through their prayers, counsel, and godly instruction.

Like all of God's other gifts, you have to accept the gift of prophecy by *faith*. It's also like electricity: You don't have to understand it to use it. It works, and that's all you really need to know. God may help you understand it better in time, but He wants you to start using it and enjoying its benefits now.

You can't avail yourself of Jesus' power while you're looking down at the waves and at the muddy water that blurs your vision. But if you look at Jesus and tap into His power, it will result in a wonderful change in your whole way of looking at things and your feelings about things.

—*Maria David*

Frequently Asked Questions

Question #1: What if I receive a message that tells me to do something very out of the ordinary?

Answer: You can't rule out the possibility that God may at some time tell you to do something that seems to go against logic or reason, and requires extra faith or courage. Sometimes God does ask us to do things that seem odd or even ridiculous, but not usually.

So before you do anything drastic, it's best to ask God to confirm that it is indeed what He wants you to do. Search the Scriptures. Look for a similar situation in the Word, or verses that support that course of action. Make sure it doesn't contradict the written Word. Don't rule out the possibility that you might have misinterpreted the prophecy or that it is incomplete. It's a good idea to go back to the Lord with any questions you have about the first message; He may either give a further explanation or

clarification that resolves the problem, or confirm His original message.

If you know others who also have the gift of prophecy or knowledge of the Scriptures, it may be helpful to explain your situation to them. Show one or two others the message you received and the Scriptures you found that support either side, and if they have the gift of prophecy, ask them to get a confirmation or clarification from the Lord for you. A confirmation received through a third party is often a big help at a time like this.

When you get God's confirmation, either through His Word or through subsequent messages, or through the Word-based counsel of others, you will know it. It will increase your faith and give you peace of mind. With His confirmation, you can proceed by faith to do whatever He has asked you to do, even if it is out of the ordinary. But if you *don't* have a peace about it, if you're still not sure, you *shouldn't* do it. "Whatever is not from faith is sin."¹

Question #2: What if the Lord tells me something, but I don't want to do it? Will He take away my gift of prophecy?

Answer: When you ask the Lord to speak, you should be prepared to believe, accept and do whatever He asks of you. Don't worry, though. This does not mean you will constantly receive messages that are difficult for you to receive or act upon. Jesus loves you, and He wants you to be happy. He has given you the gift of prophecy because He wants to make your life easier and better in the long run.

¹ Romans 14:23.

God has given us the majesty of choice. Life is made up of countless choices, which we are free to make without much interference from God. He points us to His Word and often reveals His will on matters that we ask Him about, but He allows us to decide which way we're going to go, His or our own. He doesn't force us to do things, or impose His will on us. How closely we follow is up to us.

Once you know what God's will is, you are even more responsible for the consequences of your decisions. In prophecy, He gives you His Word, and it's up to you whether you accept it, believe it, and act on it. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."¹ Cafeteria-style faith is not faith—you can't just pick and choose. Prophecy, by its very nature, must be received with an open mind and a yielded heart.

Don't worry though, if some things God tells you are a little difficult to believe at first. God is "plenteous in mercy."² He understands your human nature and weakness, and being the good Father that He is, has great patience with you. What matters most to Him is that you sincerely *want* to have faith and you *want* to obey Him. If you do, He will increase your faith and help you follow. "Faith is the gift of God."³

If something the Lord asks of you still seems too difficult, even after you have fed your faith with the written Word, talk it over some more with Him. He may give you more details or explain it in a way

¹ Hebrews 11:6.

² Psalm 103:8.

³ Ephesians 2:8.

that will give you faith to do what He's asking of you, or He may suggest an alternative course of action that would be easier for you, though perhaps not always with the same results. "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."¹

Often when God presents His will to us, He allows leeway for us to choose several options within His will. So if you don't have the faith and confidence to enact some of what He's told you to do, you can ask Him if there is any other way you can go about obeying Him, within His will. Of course, this isn't to be used as an excuse to take God's messages lightly, because most of the time His first message will contain His best and highest will, that which will bear the most fruit and bring about His plan in the most efficient way. At the same time "He knows our frame, He remembers that we are dust,"² and even if He doesn't give you any other options when you go back to Him, He may give you just the message of strength and encouragement that you need to tackle what He wants you to do.

The ideal, of course, is that you obey Him no matter what He asks of you, and this is what will make you happiest in the end. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."³

¹ 1 Corinthians 10:13.

² Psalms 103:14.

³ John 13:17 KJV.

Question #3: If someone wants me to ask God for the winning lottery number, or wants to know some specific detail about their future—or if I have a question of that nature—will God tell me?

Answer: If you have a specific question like that, why not ask Him? That's the surest way to find out if it's His will to tell you certain details. He's certainly *able*, and if that's really what's best for everyone involved, He just might!

On the other hand, He tells us that we sometimes *don't* get the answers we want because we ask *amiss*, out of greed or selfishness.¹ Our motives are wrong. He also reserves the right not to tell us things that we don't really need to know, or are not in our best interest to know now.

A common mistake that people make is expecting God to tell them every detail about their future. Although the Lord can and sometimes does reveal secrets of the future, He sets certain limits on what He will tell us—and He does this for our own good. As our heavenly Father, He knows that we can only handle so much at a time, and that if we knew everything about the future, it would take much of the magic out of the present. It would also reduce our dependence on His guidance, because we'd feel like we "know it all." We'd then be much more likely to make mistakes because we're depending on our own wisdom instead of God's.

So the Lord tells us what we need to know at the time, and He sometimes prepares our hearts for the future in some way by giving us clues or

¹ James 4:3.

hints. But the Christian life is one of faith, and God often tests our faith by only revealing His plan for our lives little by little, step by step.

Your path through life is like a winding road—you don't always see what's around the bend until you get there. Sometimes God sees fit to reveal things to us right before we get to the bend, if He knows that the information will benefit us, but He usually takes it one bend at a time.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.”¹ If you're trusting the Lord to guide you through life, He's going to direct your paths and bring you through experiences He knows will benefit you in the long run.—So trust Him!

If you have a question, or face a tough decision, or you need guidance in some aspect of your life, by all means ask Him! Then be willing to receive as much or as little as God wishes to show you. If you ask in faith, He'll either tell you at least part of the answer, or He'll explain why now is not the best time for you to know. Whatever He says, you can trust that He who sees the past, present and the future, He who loves you more than anyone else ever could, has your best interests at heart.

¹ Proverbs 3:5–6.

Question #4: What if I try to follow the steps in this booklet, and I ask God for the gift of prophecy, but don't receive it? Does He not give this gift to some people? If I don't get it, am I at a disadvantage spiritually?

Answer: The Lord has promised that if we ask Him in faith, we will receive. There are times, though, when He answers differently than we expect, or His timetable is different than ours. For reasons we don't always understand, the Lord doesn't give some people evidence that they have received the gift of prophecy immediately when they ask. If you are one of those people, don't give up! The Lord may simply be testing your faith, or teaching you patience and perseverance. Or He may be bringing you closer to Him by making you more desperate in prayer. Or He may make you wait in order to keep you humble, or to help you appreciate what a miraculous manifestation of His Spirit prophecy really is, when He does give you evidence of it further down the road.

In the meantime, keep trying. Often when people first receive the gift of prophecy, they only receive very short messages—perhaps only a few words or a paraphrased Bible verse. To them, that doesn't seem like prophecy. Well, they have the gift, but theirs is a “baby” gift. The more they exercise it, the more it grows. So perhaps you *do* have the gift, and just don't realize it. Thank God for every word He gives you, keep going back for more, and you'll get more!

Even if you *don't* have the gift of prophecy, that doesn't mean you can't follow the Lord or love Him

and others, or even find His will in your life. There are other gifts of the Spirit, and the Lord may bless you with one or more of those instead. Perhaps He knows you need those more, or He will be able to accomplish more through them. And the most important gift of the Lord's Spirit is *love!* The apostle Paul said: "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge ... but have not love, I am nothing. Love never fails."¹

If you didn't get any proof that you've received the gift of prophecy as soon as you prayed for it, or even if you *never* get a prophecy, you can still avail yourself of the Lord's living Words through others who have the gift.

And you can still draw very close to Him in your personal quiet time, by reading, studying, and meditating on His written Word; through praying and giving Him your cares, thoughts, desires and worries; through asking Him to speak to you in other ways; through simply enjoying being in His presence. As you continue to be faithful to take time with Him, He will be faithful to speak to You in one of the many ways that He uses, even if not in direct prophecy.

¹ 1 Corinthians 13:2,8.

Question #5: If prophecy really works, and if God is willing to talk to anyone who will listen, then why don't more people hear from Heaven?

Answer: The first requirement is to establish a personal connection with Jesus by accepting Him as Savior and Lord. But unfortunately, even many who have received Jesus into their hearts simply don't believe they can hear from Heaven in prophecy. If they would only dare to try it, to put God on the spot by sincerely asking Him to speak to them, He would. That tiny step of faith is all it would take.

In most cases, their minds get in the way. Hearing from Heaven just isn't logical! This is why Jesus said we have to become as children to enter the heavenly realm.¹ Children don't know any better, so they just do what God says.

"Not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise."² Intellectuality can work against you when it comes to hearing God's voice, although having several degrees doesn't necessarily disqualify you. After all, Paul the apostle was a very educated man, and he heard God's voice. At the same time, hearing from God requires humbling yourself before Him, and putting your own reasoning and intelligence in subjection to His will, if you're going to have any success.

God is the one who gave us our ability to think, and of course He expects us to use our brains. But He also gives us the option of choosing *His* mind over our own. Those who choose to tap into His in-

¹ Matthew 18:3.

² 1 Corinthians 1:26–27.

finite knowledge and wisdom see and hear wonderful and marvelous things; those who choose not to are limited to the confines of their finite minds.

Question #6: What if I have the gift of prophecy, but then one day when asking the Lord to speak I don't get anything?

The first thing to do is not be discouraged or think that you've somehow "lost" your gift of prophecy. There could be a number of reasons why you're drawing a blank. Maybe you're distracted by other thoughts or things going on around you. Or perhaps the Lord is just testing you to see if you'll persevere and hold on for the answer. Sometimes He wants to see if you'll have the faith to patiently wait for Him to speak, instead of just expecting it to always happen immediately. Or maybe He wants to see how desperate you are and how willing you are to receive, before He begins to give the answers you need.

If after some time you don't get anything, then try re-reading some of your favorite verses or passages from the Bible to renew your faith, and pray earnestly. Check your heart to make sure there aren't any unconfessed sins hampering your link with the Lord. Check that you haven't been missing any of the basic requirements for hearing clearly from Heaven, like spending time with the Lord and His Word, or coming to Him humbly, or asking Him to help you set aside your own thoughts. Then try again. If you still don't get anything, then maybe the Lord has a reason for not giving you the answer right then. But in any case, don't let it discourage you from coming back to the Lord next time! He's more will-

ing to give than we are to receive, and even if He doesn't reveal the answer to your specific question at that moment, He may give you words of comfort and reassurance.

Question #7: Are there other ways to find God's will besides prophecy?

Answer: Yes, there are several other ways to find God's will. These include the following: 1) Applying the written Word to your situation. 2) The "voice of the Word"—which is when you're reading the Word and suddenly something stands out to you as being the specific will of God for you, or the answer to your question. 3) Receiving direct revelations in ways other than prophecy, such as dreams, visions, or impressions. 4) Seeking counsel from others who are strong in faith and knowledge of the Word. 5) Circumstances which you believe to be engineered by the Lord—also known as "open and closed doors."¹ 6) Personal concern or conviction. 7) Receiving specific, predetermined signs in answer to your requests—also known as "fleeces" after a story in the Bible when Gideon used a fleece of wool to test God's instructions.²

When you face an especially important decision, or one that will affect other people, it's wise to find and confirm God's will through more than one means. Asking others to hear from the Lord for you is a good way to get an objective party involved, but if that's not possible, you can ask God to use His Word or one or more of the other ways listed above to confirm what He's told you in prophecy.

¹ Revelation 3:8.

² Judges 6:36–40.

Question #8: What if God guides me to do a certain thing, but it results in failure? Does that mean God misled me?

Answer: You need to remember that even if something is God's will, and even if you obey His voice and do your part to perform His will, things may not always work out as you imagine or hope they will. Why? Because by giving us all the majesty of choice, God has, in a sense, confined Himself to operate according to our decisions. He knows what would be best, and you may believe what He tells you and do your best to follow, but other people who are involved might disrupt the process with *their* decisions if they're not also yielded to His will. Through their decisions they can also partly influence the outcome of prophecy.

If things don't turn out exactly as you expect according to what God told you in advance, go to the Lord again and ask Him to explain what happened. In fact, it's best to keep checking in with Him as things develop, so He can keep instructing you if and when the situation changes or when people make unexpected choices (good or bad) that affect what is happening. The Lord doesn't control or force people; they have free will. But He can tell you what to do if their decisions change what He originally told you was His best. When people's choices change the road conditions, He will show you the next best route to travel. Either way, He'll get you to your destination.

It's never God's fault if things don't turn out as you thought, or as He first indicated would be best. People fail, but God never fails. But the wonderful thing is, even when you mess up or others mess up,

God is able to work everything out in the end if you love the Lord and are doing your best to follow Him by taking time in His Word and being a sample of His love to others. “All things work together for good to those who love God.”¹

Question #9: What if I think I’m hearing from Heaven, but then the message doesn’t make sense or doesn’t work?

Answer: There may be times when you will get distracted, or your motives won’t be quite right. Or maybe you failed to ask the Lord to erase your own opinions or desires in the matter, or you were unwilling to let go of your preconceived ideas and be open to whatever He had to tell you. Or maybe you just misinterpreted what the Lord was saying. This is why it’s so important to *confirm* the messages you receive by one or more of the other ways to find God’s will.

As long as you do your best to stay close to the Lord and fulfill His basic requirements of filling up with His Word and putting aside your own will when hearing from Him, He will keep you on the safe and fruitful path of obedience to His will. God isn’t trying to see if He can trip you up or cause you to fail. To the contrary, He wants nothing more than to see you succeed. He is more willing to give than you are to receive. If you call upon Him, He promises to answer. He *loves* you! As He told His disciples—and this is His message to us today also: “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have

¹ Romans 8:28.

made known to you.”¹ He wants to be a part of your life, to guide you along the path of His perfect will, because He knows that will make you happiest and have the best results in the long run.

¹ John 15:15.

A Message from Heaven —for *You!*

It seems only fitting that a booklet about receiving personal words from Heaven would contain such a message for you. The proof of the pudding is in the tasting, so “taste and see that the Lord is good!” (Psalm 34:8).

(Jesus speaking:) You listen to people on Earth who you love and admire, to people you respect and seek counsel from. Now I ask that you who love and respect Me, your Lord, also listen to Me, for I have so much to say to you! I want to speak to you just as a friend, as a father, as a soul-mate might. I don't want our relationship together to be formal, but personal. I speak to you as much as you will listen. But like a radio, you will only pick up My heavenly signals very faintly unless you make a special effort to tune your receiver to My station and block out all other signals that would distract—the cares of this life, day-to-day worries, and your natural reasoning.

Please don't turn away just as we are about to get better acquainted. Hearing from Me is really just as simple as asking Me to speak and then listening. Don't quench the small flame of faith in your heart. You can only benefit from a closer relationship with Me.

I will lead you in every way that you allow Me to—through My written Word, through the counsel of others who also know and love Me, and through My voice of prophecy.

If you are still hesitant about this prophecy idea, unsure whether to attempt it, just try it and see the results! I hold in My hands the answers and solutions to every problem and challenge you will face in life. I may not always keep you *from* the storms of life, but I will always keep you *through* them.

Going through your life listening to Me and going through life without heeding My voice are as different as setting out on a trip *with* a map, or setting out *without* one. It can make the difference between getting to your destination directly, or getting lost as you attempt to make your way.

My child, you are special to Me—yes, you, just you! When I died, I died for *you*. I would have died for you even if you had been the only one on Earth—that is how much I love you! Please let Me communicate with you and love and care for you in every way possible.

Eternally yours,

Jesus

Power Promises to Help You Hear from Heaven

- ◆ “No good thing will [God] withhold from those who walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:11).
- ◆ “In the day when I cried out, You answered me, and made me bold with strength in my soul” (Psalm 138:3).
- ◆ “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth” (Jeremiah 1:9).
- ◆ “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3).
- ◆ “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. ... He reveals deep and secret things.” (Daniel 2:20, 22).
- ◆ “Do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit” (Mark 13:11).

- ◆ “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:9–13).
- ◆ “When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come” (John 16:13).
- ◆ “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams” (Acts 2:17).

The *Get Activated!* series

If you'd like to learn more about how you can develop your personal relationship with God and receive His blessings, love, and happiness in your life, don't miss the rest of the *Get Activated!* series. These include:

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An easy-to-follow user's manual for the greatest creative energy there is or ever will be—the power of God!

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Contrary to a popular misconception, God does *not* expect you to sort out your own problems and fend for yourself!

He has a very personal interest in *you*, and wants to speak to you personally and directly. He will answer your questions, solve your problems, give you wisdom when you're bewildered, lead the way when you feel lost, lift your spirits when you're low, make you a strength and encouragement to others, and love you from here to eternity!

Would you like to know how you can hear God speak to you personally? Follow the simple step-by-step guidelines on these pages and discover the wonders of *Hearing from Heaven!*

