

My Father's House

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Forever Ruined for the Ordinary *The Adventure of Hearing and Obeying God's Voice* by Joy Dawson

Fr. Bill McCarthy, MSA

Joy Dawson has written an exciting book, a book that will lead any believer into a deeper relationship with Jesus so that they can personally communicate with the Lord of the universe. Be prepared for a dramatic change in your life as you read it. This book is revolutionary and no one can explain it better than the gifted, godly Joy Dawson. So said Dr. Bill Bright, founder and president of Campus Crusade for Christ.

We First Met Joy...

Joy Dawson had a profound impact on the ministry of *My Father's House* when we first began. Sr. Bernadette and I met her several times and she prophesied that we were to work together. This was even before *My Father's House* came to be. I remember in those early years devouring her tapes on holiness, listening and prayer. Now, in this book, she puts it all together. Joy and her husband, Jim, now live in Los Angeles and are members of Youth With a Mission, an interdenominational church and ministry. Joy's previous books include *Intimate Friendship with God*, *Some of the Ways of God in Healing*, and *Intercession: Thrilling and Fulfilling*.

A Challenge

Do you want to hear God's voice and discover 24 ways in which He speaks? Do you want to discern God's voice from other voices and know why God delays answers? Do you want to recognize the pitfalls of deception and learn how to avoid them? Do you want to understand God's character more fully? Do you want to get God's viewpoint on obedience and know the ramifications of disobedience? In short, do you want to experience the greatest challenge in life and be forever ruined for the ordinary? Then read and study this book.

God Speaks

Have you ever said, "If only I could hear God's voice, I would do whatever He told me"? Many years ago, that's exactly what I said. Apparently that statement got God's attention, because as soon as I started to get still enough and quiet enough to listen, He started to speak to me specifically, personally, and conversationally in a whole new dimension. My relationship with God became exciting and infinitely more meaningful. I was tuned in and turned on to God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. I took off

on the adventure of a lifetime—hearing and obeying God’s voice. I was forever ruined for the ordinary.

A Great God

Our God is the most extraordinary, fascinating, intriguing, exciting, mysterious, yet accessible Being in the universe. It still boggles my mind and excites my heart that the One who has the power to speak worlds and planets into existence and uphold them by the word of His power delights to tell me where my lost pen, needle, button, or ten cents is located. I’m totally impressed by His commitment to be personally involved with the creatures He has created.

Normal Christianity

So aren’t you glad that normal Christianity includes your hearing your heavenly Father’s voice any time He sees that you have a need? I have always been puzzled by well-meaning good Christian people who would say that those of us who hear God’s voice at a personal level today, apart from through His Word, are weird. I think it weird if we do not expect to hear and experience hearing his voice as a way of life and in the many ways he has chosen to communicate with us. After all, Jesus said that His sheep hear His voice, know His voice, and follow Him (John 10:3-4, 27). But then again, sheep are simple and uncomplicated. So I figure that those who remain childlike and trusting, believing that it’s primarily the Shepherd’s responsibility to make the signals clear enough for the sheep to know which pasture they’re to be in, will keep their eyes on the shepherd, hear His voice, and go in the right direction without a lot of stress.

God’s Detailed Plan

God has a detailed, remarkable plan for every person’s life—a plan consistent with his character. He is a remarkable God. But He never intended us to make our plans and then ask Him to bless them. What an insult to the One who created us and who alone knows how to fulfill us.

We read in Jeremiah 10:23, “I know, O Lord, that a man’s life is not his own’ it is not for man to direct his steps” (NIV). Okay, so obviously, in order for us to know what His plans for our lives are, we must be able to hear his voice. The good news is that “A man’s steps are directed by the Lord. / How then can anyone understand His own way?” (Proverbs 20:24 NIV).

We don’t have the faintest idea what is best for us, so what a relief that there is a Master Mind who does – a God with a heart full of unfathomable love and with the ability to communicate with all of us who want to listen and obey. That gives cause for rejoicing and more relaxing.

A Way of Life

Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mount of God” (Mt 4:4). All this adds up to the fact that it is totally impossible to effectively function as a Christ without hearing God’s voice as a way of life. The reassuring news is that “He who is of God hears God’s words” (Jn 8:47) and, “Everyone

who is of the truth hears My voice” (Jn 18:37).

100% Honest

That last promise tells us that if we’ll be 100 percent honest with God, He will make His voice crystal clear to us. Can we say, “I’ll buy that. That’s a fair deal”? I can assure you it is a fabulous deal. It pays dividends every time.

Intimate and Personal

However, if our main concept of God and ourselves is that of a Master and His servants, we will only expect Him to give orders about what we consider to be important issues. This wrong concept doesn’t match with the longing in God’s heart for intimacy of relationship with us. We, in turn, deprive ourselves of experiencing true fulfillment.

Image and Likeness

Remember, one of the main reasons God made us in his image and likeness is so that we can interact with Him. I believe part of God’s unparalleled greatness is His desire and ability to be intimately involved in the smallest details of the lives of billions of the creatures He created and to be communicating to them all at one time, if necessary, in precisely the way and timing that serve their best interests – and in their native language. Mind-boggling to say the least! It is totally outside our ability to comprehend how God does this because we are finite, but it is within our ability to accept the fact that he does. Why? Because we are talking about the One with the ultimate gifting in communication skills, who is at the same time the ultimate Lover of our souls. We pause to wonder in awe, in worship and in gratitude.

Enoch

We read in Genesis 5:24 that “Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him” That does not mean that Enoch spent his life on another planet, disassociated from other people. It simply means that he had a closer relationship with God than others, and is a perfect picture of what normal Christianity should be.

My life’s motto is, “To know God and make Him known.” The outcome of knowing God intimately should be a deep desire for others to experience the same wonderful fulfillment.

Conditions for Hearing God’s Voice

1. **Humility.** One of our greatest universal needs is to experience and walk in humility at increasingly deeper levels. Period. What it comes to experiencing divine guidance, the Bible makes it clear that we will not make any progress without it. “He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way” (Ps 25:9). Pride feels no need to inquire of God and take time to seek his face. When we see this from God’s perspective, it is both proud and foolish to live independently of Him by continuously making our own decisions and hoping or presuming they are in His will. The Bible says that “God looks down from heaven upon the sons of men, To see if there are any that are wise, that seek after God” (Ps 53:2).

2. **Faith.** Faith is the second condition necessary for hearing God’s voice. We have to believe God will speak to us. Hebrews 11:6 makes that starkly clear: “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.” By far the most important basis for our faith is the character of God. Characteristics of God is that of being all-knowable, and of being of God of limitless power (has all the answers), infinite wisdom (communicates in every language), total justice (tells us and all involved what is right and just), of absolute righteousness (never tells us anything unholy or inconsistent with His character), and of unfathomable love (longs to communicate with us).

3. **A Clean Heart.** The third condition to ensure that we will hear God’s voice, is the need for us to have a clean heart. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear” (Ps 66:18). We need to get quiet and give God time to convict us if necessary. God’s silences can at times be attributed to undealt-with sin in our lives. For example, when the Scribes were not prepared to be honest with Jesus, He refused to answer their questions (see Lk 2):1-8).

4. **A Yielded Will.** The fourth condition in order to hear God’s voice is having a yielded will. It is important to understand that guidance from God will be according to the extent of our commitment to do His will. God, in the enormity of his grace, will always work with whatever we give Him. In other words, if we say we will serve Him with certain conscious or subconscious reservations and stipulations, He will give us directions accordingly. But if we go all the way with Him, and make the ultimate commitment, He will give us vastly different directions. This means telling Him that we want our lives to affect every nation on earth for the extension of His Kingdom, and that the price tag is up to Him. Simply put, our levels of abandonment to God determine God’s levels of directions to us. Yielding our will to His also means following Biblical principles for God’s revealed will to be carried out.

5. **Waiting Before the Lord.** Perhaps the most difficult condition to fulfill is the next one: Waiting before the Lord – giving Him protracted time, if necessary, to speak, and listening to His voice with our attention focused on His person. I like to picture Him on His throne in His dazzling beauty, magnificent splendor and supreme authority.

We must ask ourselves this burning question: How much serious listening time do we give God, as a way of life—time, not just for answers to our questions, but for anything He may want to say to us? The apostle Peter was president of the “Let Us” club – always projecting his good ideas. But we notice that God was uniquely unimpressed, especially on the Mount of Transfiguration, when He spoke audibly out of heaven in response to Peter and said, “This is my Son, whom I love. *Listen to him!*” (Mk 9:7). “Oh, that My people would *listen* to Me, That Israel would walk in My ways” (Ps 81:12-13). Peter had to radically change his ways for God’s destiny to be fulfilled for his life. So did I, for the same reason. No one needed to learn to wait on God more than this author! Gut, thank God, He can make our greatest points of

weakness our greatest strengths when we keep yielding to the Holy Spirit's disciplines in the fear of the Lord.

6. **Recognizing the Source of the Voice.** The Sixth Condition to fulfill to be sure we hear God's voice is to recognize that there are three sources from which impressions can come to us. We have already established the validity of the first voice, the voice of God. The second is the voice of self, which comes from either our human reasoning or from our own desires. Our human reasoning is what we think the answer should be. The Bible does not leave us in any doubt about the folly of relying on that source.

From Ego

Impressions can also come from our desires, which are often strong, so we need to come to the place where we honestly say to God as Jesus did, "Not My will, but Yours, be done" (Lk 22:42). By an act of our wills, we die to what we think and what we want, and believe God accepts the death to our self life that we offer Him. As we will it to be so and trust Him, He makes it so. And dead people don't talk. Romans 6:11 describes the process: "Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin [or self], but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord." When you have truly done this, you know you are in neutral gear.

Satan and Evil Spirits

We must also recognize that satanic and demonic power can bring impressions to our minds. They can quote and misquote Scriptures and even direct us to specific Scriptures. The voices of demonic spirits are often loud, urgent, and insistent, as Satan is always trying to precipitate a crisis, and trying to get us to act hastily. Whereas, the voice of the Lord is quiet but persistent, motivating us to come aside and quietly wait and listen. The Word of God tells us in James 4:7, "Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." We can always test the source of our impressions.

Ways in Which God Speaks

In Section 4, Joy Dawson lists ways God speaks. She divides them into four categories:

I-9 Ways God Speaks through His Word

1. Directly as we read it
2. in conjunction with a word of knowledge
3. in conjunction with inner witness accompanied by inner peace
4. when it is literature
5. when you hear it quoted
6. when specific portions are given by prophetic teachers
7. in meditation
8. even when it is on billboards, television or radio
9. when we have it memorized

II-8 Ways God Speaks Through What We See

1. In visions

2. in dreams
3. through angels
4. through signs and symbols (rainbows, pillar or cloud)
5. through creation
6. through circumstances
7. through casting lots
8. through the urim and thummim (As a Protestant, she would not look to God speaking through the Eucharist or confession.)

III. Eight Ways God Speaks Through Our Hearing

1. Directly into our thoughts
2. audible voice
3. a word of prophecy
4. music and poetry
5. preaching
6. other people
7. animals
8. testimonies

(As a Protestant, Joy would not look to God speaking through the Church, pope, bishops and priests or through Mary.)

IV. God Speaks Through Impressions to Our Spirits

1. A strong conviction and peace
2. The promptings of the Spirit
3. The constraints of the Spirit
4. God's physical touch
5. Impressions or senses

In Section 4, she writes of reasons why God delays answers and the tests and purposes connected with delays. First, we may have asked the wrong question at a wrong time. For example, it's wrong to ask God when Jesus is coming again; or how we will die or when. "I have many things to say to you but you cannot bear them now" Jesus tells us (Jn 16:12).

You may not have asked the more important or deeper question. Ask him to drop that question in your mind. You may not ask concerning things that are not your business. You may not have been obedient to a previous word or you are out from under authority; or there may be others he wants you to work with; or your timing may be off. God often waits for the right moment. Also, circumstances may have to take place first.

When seeking God together in a team situation, God can withhold an answer from one of the members because of the following reasons:

- Maybe because of undealt-with pride because of the clarity and frequency with which one person hears God's voice

- Maybe because God wants to especially encourage one or more of the team by giving them the answer and withholding it from another
- Possibly teaching each of us to be humble and willing to receive direction from the Lord through others, without being irresponsible
- Possibly teaching us to be dependent on the Lord through others for the purposes of having closer fellowship with them.
 - In Jeremiah 42:7, Jeremiah waited ten days before receiving the word of the Lord to give to the people without having understanding why.
- Perhaps God withholds an answer from us because He is testing the reaction of someone near us, should the answer be other than what they would choose. He could be trying to bring them to a new place of relinquishing us and themselves into God's hands for whatever new purposes He has for both lives.
- Also, if others knew first what God had spoken to us in a group situation, they could be tempted to follow our directions instead of getting their directions from the Lord firsthand.
- Another reason for a delay is that another or others may need to take responsibility with us in seeking God for an answer on a particular issue.
- Sometimes God causes us to wait for His answers because he has purposes to be worked out in the lives of others first. Perhaps there are things God is in the process of teaching them that are connected with our lives.
- God may be withholding the answer from us because others in leadership have delayed in fulfilling their responsibility to ask us to fulfill some ministry assignment related to a particular time frame. Do not act presumptuously. Ask God to act on the leadership in relation to us so that we can know God's will for the time frame with which we are concerned.

When the Next Move Is God's

Now for those of you who have received no answers over a long period of time of seeking God, having fulfilled all the conditions, here's my counsel: put Psalm 35:5 into action. Stop inquiring and commit the matter into God's hands.

God's Ways and Purposes in Testing Us

Before we consider the many and varied ways God tests us, we need to understand that God is absolutely just and righteous. This means we can never blame Him, regardless of how puzzled we are by a delayed answer. "For the righteous God tests the hearts and minds" (Ps 7:9).

ĩ A delay can be because God is testing us to see whether we're diligent seekers or

casual inquirers.

- 2 God could be testing us as to whether we are going to rest in faith that He will answer us based on the knowledge of His character, and His promises that He will.
- 3 The Lord may also be testing us when we have to give someone an answer related to a specific occasion or we have to give a message from the Lord, for instance, as a speaker at a meeting. Are we committed to seeking God until we hear from Him, and that we have nothing to say until He speaks? Now that's often a tough test.
- 4 God can also test us by delaying an answer to see whether we will understand the immense privilege of waiting on Him because of Who he is, or whether we will be impatient or resentful.
- 5 Another test may be whether or not we will receive God's answer through another person of proven ministry and character and let God confirm this answer to us. This is not one of God's normal or usual methods, but he can be testing our humility by using it.
- 6 God may be testing us to see if we are prepared to be given understanding from God when told to do something very difficult or unusual, knowing that the understanding may not come until after we've been obedient. Abraham is a classic example of this test. When God told him to go up Mount Moriah and sacrifice his son to God, he hadn't a clue how or when God would explain this extraordinarily difficult and perplexing command.
- 7 God's test for us could also be to see if we are prepared for the circumstances in our lives to get worse before God fulfills His promises to us. No matter how Joseph did it right, not only did it go wrong, but the circumstances became increasingly difficult to endure, let alone understand. From the devastating trauma of being abandoned in a pit as a teenager to being sold as a slave into a foreign country, from having his character assassinated and being horribly misjudged to being thrown into prison, it was hardly what we would call being given a break. It was the pits!

But God had not forgotten Joseph's address. In a momentous, monumental moment everything was reversed. God came through big-time and Joseph landed up with a permanent address at the Egyptian palace! Psalm 105:19 gives us understanding of this phenomenal sage. "Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him."

- 8 Finally, and this is really the "jackpot" or the bottom line, from God's perspective: Are we prepared to wait until the maximum glory can be given to our precious Lord Jesus before He answers our prayers and fulfills His promises to us? Are we really living for His glory as the supreme desire of our hearts? If so, it will not matter how long we wait.

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