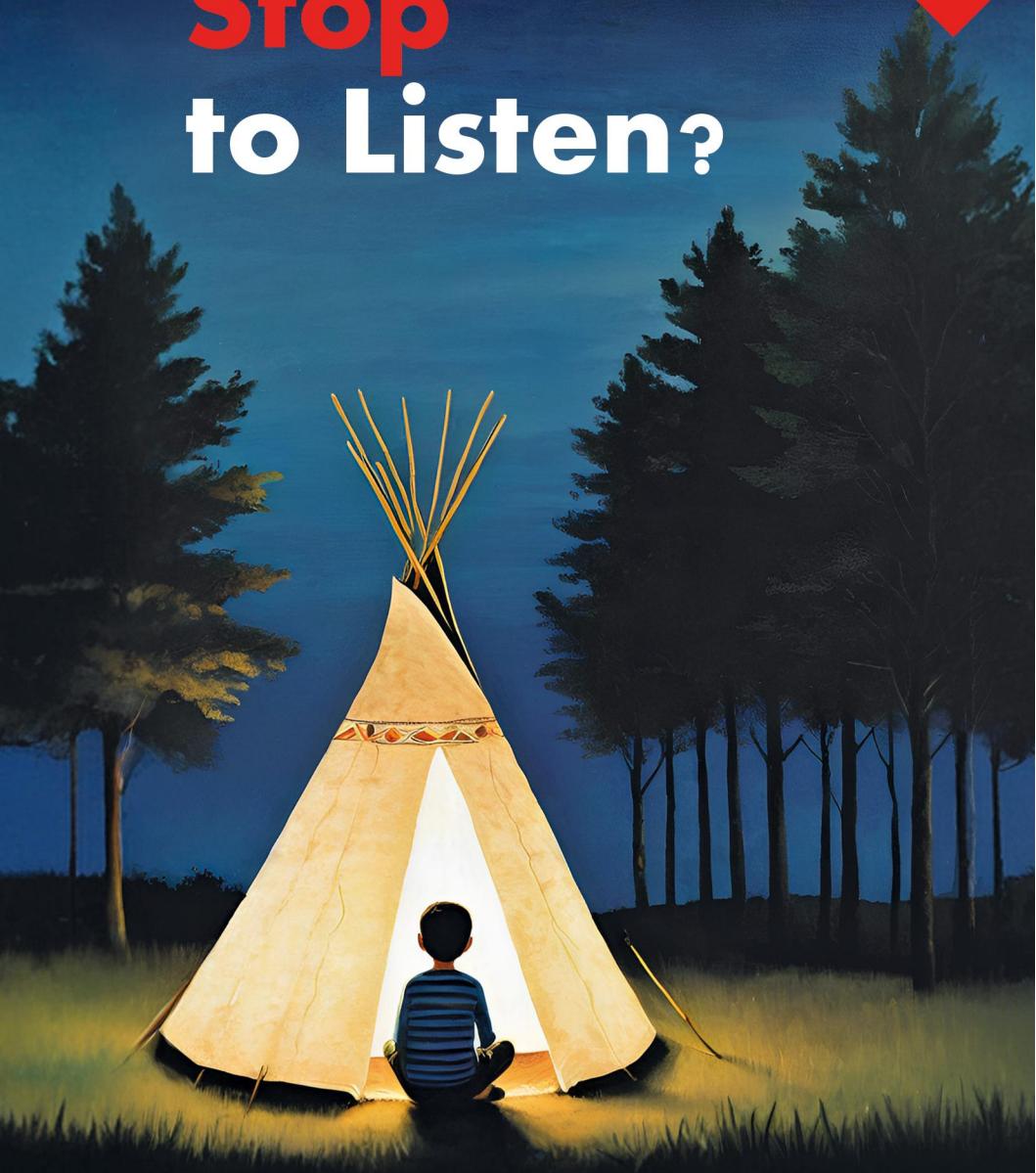


Did you Stop to Listen?

From the
Book 120
Tips to Hearing
God's Voice



12 Tips to Hearing God's Voice

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Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet. These 12 tips are from the book “120 Tips to Hearing God's Voice” and are designed to be used in a group context.

My hope is that it will get you thinking and talking about how God speaks, and that you will develop your ability to recognise his voice.

These are tips not rules.

In the following pages, I have put together some tips that I have found helpful during my spiritual journey. However, it is important to remember that these are tips and not rules. Consider each tip with the Lord.

Hearing God is not about adhering to a set of principles but developing a relationship with him. He is our loving Father who draws us with invitations, not a dictator who gives us a set of instructions.

For those leading a group, I have included group activations. However, you may want to devise your own.

I would love to hear any testimonies that result from discussing these tips. So please feel free to write to me using the contact details below.

Stephen

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Week 1

Tip #1 WHY LISTEN?

When I was younger I believed that the Lord spoke through scripture and circumstance. In the latter case, if I wanted to go to an event at university, but some visitor arrived at the house, I would have seen it as “God stopping me from going to the event.” I am sure he was talking to me in many other ways, even though I didn't recognize it at the time. However, since I have passionately pursued hearing his voice, I have seen exponential growth in my walk with the Lord. The following are some reasons to seek his voice:

- **Relationship:** The primary goal of learning to listen is to develop a relationship. What kind of relationship thrives without listening?
- **He tells us to:** Jesus tells us to listen to him on many occasions. He doesn't want us to listen to him out of obligation or as a slave would to a dictator. However, he wants us to respond to his love invitations.
- **Testimonies:** Since pursuing his voice, I have hundreds of testimonies. “We overcome by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony” (Rev 12:11 NIV).
- **Faith:** “Faith comes by **hearing** the word of the Lord” (Rom 10:17). To grow in faith, you must grow in listening.
- **Peace and Joy:** Jesus's voice brought stillness to the waves. As we listen to him we will find more peace and joy in our lives.
- **Earthly Destiny:** As we listen to the Lord, he reveals our earthly destiny. We become more aware of our callings

and this brings a sense of purpose.

- **Eternal Destiny:** Many earthly callings will come to an end in heaven. There will be no watch repairers, doctors, locksmiths, prophets, or evangelists etc. As you get to know the Lord he can also reveal your eternal destiny.
- **Provision:** “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt 6:33 ESV). If we have a strong passion to seek righteousness, we must engage with the topic of faith because it is written, “The righteous will live by faith” (Hab 2:4). Developing faith is important, and in Romans 10:17, we are told that faith requires an ability to listen to the Spirit. As we seek his righteousness – and subsequently faith and his voice – we will find that “all these things” will be added to us. His voice opens up a pathway to his provision.
- **Hope:** When the Lord gives you glimpses of things to come, including heavenly visions, it brings huge amounts of hope into your life. If there is a cure to depression, it is the hope that comes from hearing his voice.
- **Healing:** On multiple occasions, being able to hear his voice has brought about physical healing. The centurion said to Jesus, “Say the word and my servant will be healed” (Matt 8:8 NIV). If you want to see healing, he can give you a word. But to hear that word, listening is often required.

ACTIVATION

Pray, “Lord, I long to have more testimonies. I long to see more power, peace, provision, hope, and healing. Teach me to listen to your voice.”

GROUP ACTIVATION

Discuss where listening to God features in stories from the Bible.

Tip #9 BROADCAST, RECEPTION, RECOGNITION

Imagine a radio presenter. They **broadcast** a signal from a satellite dish. Next, the signal is **received** through an antenna. Finally, while a stranger might not recognize the broadcaster's voice, hopefully a friend or regular listener will **recognize** the speaker.

In a similar way, God **broadcasts** his voice, we **receive** his voice, and hopefully we can **recognize** it.

BROADCASTING

God doesn't have an issue with speaking. He is the farmer that scatters the seeds in the parable of the sower. He is a skilled sower. He is more than capable of broadcasting. However, there may be some broadcast issues that we have caused.

Some Broadcast Issues:

- We haven't asked him to speak. "We have not because we ask not." For instance, if you want God to give you direction regarding your job, have you asked him for guidance?
- We are asking a poor question? If you are not getting an answer, rephrase the question.
- He has already given us the answer. I suggest you revisit your journals.
- His timing is different. Wait for him to broadcast in his way and timing.
- We haven't made time to sit down and listen to him.
- There is something else on his agenda that he wants to talk to us about.

RECEPTION

Receiving his voice depends on the state of our hearts. In the parable of the sower, there are different types of soil. If we have soft hearts, are willing to listen, and surrendered to his will, receiving won't be an issue. The biggest obstacles to receiving are as follows:

Some Reception Issues:

- Hardness of heart
- Bitterness
- Accusation
- Judgemental attitudes
- Self-defence
- Self-pity
- Impatience

RECOGNITION

Recognizing God's voice is often the greatest challenge. God may be speaking, and you may be hearing him, but are you perceiving his voice?

“For God speaks in one way, and in two,
though man does not perceive it.” (Job 33:14 ESV)

An example of this is as follows:

Jill is struggling to find a plumber to fix her heating so prays. As she is driving down the road and thinking about what to have for supper she suddenly thinks, “I must catch up with Florence”, but then she never does. Little did she know that the idea of ringing Florence was actually an answer to her prayer. The Lord knew Jill’s friend Florence had just started dating an excellent plumber. He knew that if Jill had rang Florence this new relationship would have been mentioned during conversation and Jill would now know an available plumber. The issue wasn’t God speaking

(broadcasting) or Jill's ability to receive (reception) - it was Jill's ability to recognize that the Holy Spirit inspired her with the thought, "I must catch up with Florence".

Some Recognition Issues:

1. We aren't spiritually awake enough to notice the invitations he is drawing us with.
2. We assume his answers will come in a certain way, so miss them when they come in a different way.
3. We fail to recognize the various ways he can speak.

Not only do we sometimes fail to recognise his voice, but we also often fail to recognise his answers. This almost happened in the following testimony:

During a period when I was facing financial challenges, I remember asking the Lord to bring some coffee to me without involving finance. At the time of asking I was thinking of coffee beans, or instant coffee granules. Several weeks later, someone gave me a Starbucks gift card. Another week went by and I thought, "I haven't seen the Lord answer my request for coffee yet." Suddenly it dawned on me that he had answered my prayer. I had asked for coffee; not a jar of coffee or a bag of coffee. The Lord had answered my prayer by providing a Starbucks gift card. However, initially I had failed to recognize his answer because I had been expecting the answer to come in a certain way.

Hundreds of thoughts and images float into our heads every day without us recognising where they have come from.

Recognizing the Lord's voice and his answers becomes clearer as we get to know him. If your best friend broadcasted their voice on the radio, you'd most likely recognize their voice. Similarly,

the Lord desires for us to become close friends and frequently experience his presence so that it is easier for us to recognize his voice.

Often we may ask the question, “How do we hear the Lord's voice?” The truth of the matter is, “We do hear his voice and are often receiving his voice.” The better question to ask is, “How do we recognise his voice?”

- **GOD IS ALREADY SPEAKING TO YOU.**
- **HAVE YOU ASKED HIM TO SPEAK?**
- **THE QUESTION IS NOT “HOW DO I HEAR?”, BUT “HOW DO I RECOGNISE HIS VOICE AND ANSWERS?”**

ACTIVATION

Pray, “Lord, thank you that you long to speak and have no problem in doing so. I ask you to speak into my life. “Speak Lord for your servant is listening.” Help me to receive what you are saying and recognise your voice.”

GROUP ACTIVATION

1. Discuss how you recognise the difference between two identical twins.
2. Discuss how the above reflects our relationship with God.
3. Share testimonies where you almost missed the Lord's voice. Why did you almost miss it?

Tip #49 RECOGNISE THE WAYS HE SPEAKS

As mentioned earlier, when I was younger, I generally only believed that God spoke in two ways. Firstly, through the Bible, and secondly, through circumstances. In the latter case, if I wanted to go to an event at university, but some visitor arrived

at the house, I would have seen it as “God stopping me from going to the event.” Thankfully, I have since discovered that the Lord can speak in many different ways.

Learning to hear his voice is more of a recognition issue. He is already speaking, can we perceive it?

“For God speaks in one way, and in two, though man does not perceive it.” (Job 33:14 ESV)

When we understand how he speaks, we can be more alert to his voice. Here are some ways in which he speaks:

1. **The Bible:** “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” (2 Tim 3:16 ESV)
2. **Creation:** “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.” (Ps. 19:1 ESV)
3. **Visions:** “Young men shall see visions.” (Acts 2:17 ESV)
4. **Dreams:** “Old men shall dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17 ESV)
5. **Thoughts:** “A still small voice.” (1 Kings 19:12 KJV)
6. **Peace:** “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts” (Col 3:15 ESV)
7. **Circumstances or doors:** “They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.” (Acts 16:6 ESV)
8. **Other People:** “Encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” (1 Thes 5:11 ESV)
9. **Signs and Wonders:** “God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his own will.” (Heb 2:4 NASB)
10. **Angels:** “But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.”” (Luke 2:10 NIV)

11. **Audible voice:** “A bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him'.” (Matt 17:5 ESV)
12. **Feelings:** “Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at his word.” (Isa 66:5 ESV)
13. **Animals:** “Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, 'What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?'" (Num 22:28 NIV)
14. **Art and Music:** “Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts.” (Psalm 105:2 NIV)
15. **Interpretation of tongues:** “To another the interpretation of tongues.” (1 Cor 12:10 ESV)
16. **Memory:** “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” (John 14:26 NIV)

- **GOD IS HIGHLY CREATIVE AND HAS MANY WAYS TO SPEAK TO US.**

ACTIVATION

Pray, “Lord, thank you that you are a creative God. I long to experience more of the different ways you can speak to me.”

GROUP ACTIVATION

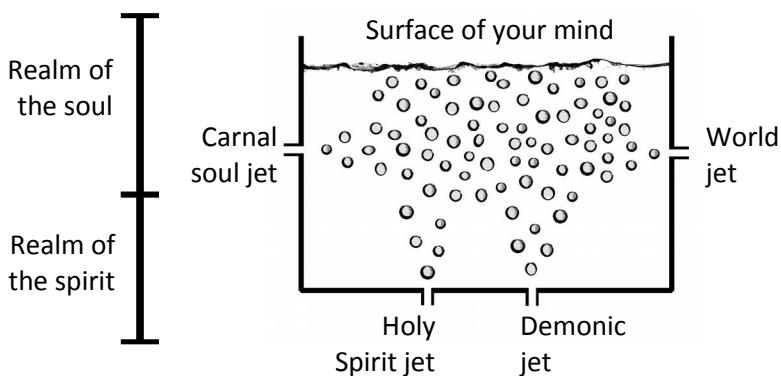
Which of the above have you encountered? Can you share a testimony concerning any of the above?

Week 2

Tip #10 PREPARATION

Preparation is key to hearing God's voice.

Picture a hot tub (Jacuzzi) with four jets. One jet on the side releases the bubbles of the carnal soul (flesh). The second jet on the side represents messages coming from the world. There are two jets on the bottom which release bubbles from the spirit realm: a Holy Spirit jet and a demonic jet. From the four jets, bubbles rise like thoughts and pop on the surface of your mind.



In order to discern the voice of the Lord, we need to minimize the bubbles rising from the carnal soul, world, and demonic jets. Then, when we ask the Lord to speak, we can have more confidence that the bubbles that rise are from him.

"Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10 ESV)

There are a variety of ways to still the soul and minimize soulish bubbles. These are as follows:

- **Remove distractions** such as switching off the phone and television.
- **Find a quiet place** to commune with the Lord. My personal favourites are: a garden bench, a quiet café, a health spa, or taking a walk in the countryside.
- **Thankfulness** is one key way to calm the soul because thankfulness leads to peace (Philippians 4:6-7).
- **Worship music**
- **Speaking in tongues.** Put on a timer for 10 minutes and speak in tongues. Combine it with kneeling for an even more powerful effect.
- **Ask for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to open the eyes of your heart** (Ephesians 1:17).
- **Confess your identity in Christ.** For example, “I am a child of God.”
- **Don't act in haste.** Give the Lord time to respond. In my experience, the Lord's voice becomes clearer after a substantial duration sitting or walking in a quiet place.
- **Repent of any obvious sin.**
- **Sit and admire creation;** thanking him for the beauty around you.
- **Confess Jesus** is Lord of your imagination and hearing.
- **Posture.** Adopt a physical posture such as kneeling.

ACTIVATION

1. Pray, “Lord, I ask you to soften and prepare my heart so that I may be attentive to your voice. Show me the best ways to abide in your presence.”
2. Next time you come to listen, spend some time doing the activities in the list above.

GROUP ACTIVATION

Discuss how you can involve the above in your daily routine.

Tip #3 WHAT ARE WE LISTENING FOR?

In the church, it seems the majority of prayers revolve around asking the Lord for scriptural understanding, provision, healing, and direction. But asking questions and listening go beyond those categories. Here are some areas we can listen for with example questions:

- **Scriptural Understanding:** listening to him for revelation on a particular passage of scripture.
 - *“Lord, how would you like to reveal your love to me through this scripture?”*
- **Developing Intimacy and Relationship:** this should be our primary reason for listening to him.
 - *“Lord, show me your beauty.”*
- **Provision:** listening to him for how he wants to provide.
 - *“Lord, how would you like me to navigate my finances?”*
- **Healing:** listening to him for how to receive healing.
 - *“Lord, what would you like to say concerning this difficulty?”*
- **Direction:** listening to him concerning our direction.
 - *“Lord, what would you like to say about me writing a book?”*
- **Navigating Issues:** listening to his advice for issues.
 - *“Lord, how would you like me to navigate the difficulties I am facing with my work team.”*
- **His Character:** listening to simply get to know his character.
 - *“Lord, can you tell me something about your*

character that will draw me closer to you?"

- **My Character:** listening to get to know yourself.
 - *"Lord, will you show me how you see me. Will you reveal something beautiful about me that I wasn't aware of?"*
- **Seeing Heaven:** It is written, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matt 6:10 NIV)
The Lord wants us to see and hear the kingdom.
 - *"Lord, will you show me the kingdom? Lord, will you give me a glimpse of heaven?"*

ACTIVATION

Pray, "Lord, you are not a slot machine. You didn't come to earth to fix broken robots but came for a bride. May I listen to you simply for the sake of getting to know you."

GROUP ACTIVATION

Share testimonies with one another that relate to the above categories.

Tip #35 THE QUESTION

One day I was asking the Lord, "What shall I do today?" I kept asking the question, getting frustrated that I wasn't hearing an answer clearly. Normally, the Lord would answer that question. Suddenly, the Lord interrupted me, "Stephen, remember what I said to you about there being a spirit behind a question. Rephrase your question."

I paused and rephrased my question, then asked the Lord, "Jesus, how would you like to reveal your love to me today?" Immediately, he answered.

It might seem pedantic, but by asking the Lord, "What shall I do?" I was effectively saying, "Jesus, you are my taskmaster and I

am your slave. Tell me what to do." Whereas asking him, "How would you like to reveal your love to me today?" implies that God is full of love for his children.

The following is what the Lord had previously said to me:

"Always think through your questions; for many a time the reason you fail to hear the answer, or see the result, is because you were asking questions from the wrong spirit. Yes, there is a spirit behind every question. Stop and consider. Come away from questions that partner with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Avoid any questions that are loaded with accusation."

"I love it when you ponder over what questions to ask me; for the words that form your questions reveal your motive behind the question. There is a big difference between asking, "Lord, what shall I do today?" and "Lord, what part of your character would you like to reveal to me today?"

"You can always ask me to fashion Holy Spirit inspired questions in you: "Lord Jesus, come and be Lord of my questions. Holy Spirit inspire me to ask godly questions." My child, let me be the source of your questions."

It is worth noting that the Lord would normally answer the question, "What shall I do today?" It is not necessarily a bad question. However, the Lord was wanting to establish a greater level of intimacy with me. He was showing me that I could improve my questions.

• **THERE IS A SPIRIT BEHIND EVERY QUESTION.**

- **CONSIDER YOUR QUESTIONS.**
- **IF YOU ARE NOT GETTING AN ANSWER, REPHRASE THE QUESTION.**

Note: a useful way to rephrase a question is to begin with the word "How".

ACTIVATION

1. Pray, "Lord, help me to form godly questions."
2. What questions have you been asking the Lord lately?
Can you rephrase them?

GROUP ACTIVATION

1. Discuss whether you think the following questions could be improved:
 - Jesus, why am I not healed?
 - Lord, when will I receive a financial breakthrough?
 - Jesus, what does this verse in the Bible mean?
 - Lord, the worship leader has been acting strange lately. What is wrong with them?
2. In groups, write some questions and discuss with one another how they can be improved.

Week 3

Tip #26 THE FEAR OF BEING WRONG

Probably the biggest hindrance to hearing God's voice is the fear of being wrong. It is true that you could be wrong when you try to hear God's voice. However, you also have to remember, "You could be right!"

Don't be discouraged. I have never heard of a great saint who achieved a high success rate in hearing God's voice overnight. Just like learning to ride a bike, you will make mistakes, fall off, and experience some hurt. But that is okay. Get up, brush yourself down, and keep trying.

I would rather step out 100 times a month to listen to God and get it right 20% of the time, than only step out 10 times, because I have such a paranoia of being wrong, and have a 70% success rate. In the first instance, I would have 20 testimonies and 80 lessons learned. In the second situation, only 7 testimonies and 3 lessons learned.

Mistakes are part of the learning process. Do you believe that "All things work together for the good of those who love him"? Then ALL includes your mistakes. Mistakes teach us. Mistakes can still create testimonies or lead to encounters. God is not mad at you. He sees the intent of your heart and willingness to try.

- **YES, YOU COULD BE WRONG,
BUT REMEMBER YOU COULD BE RIGHT!**

ACTIVATION

“Lord, I ask that you will protect me from mishearing you, but also I thank you for your grace when I make a mistake.”

GROUP ACTIVATION

As children we learn to walk, we don’t worry about making mistakes. Why do you think we worry more about making mistakes when listening to the Lord’s voice?

Tip #84 HE IS SUBTLE

Picture a husband placing a single, individually wrapped chocolate on his wife’s pillow. Now, compare it to a husband placing a large box of 500 chocolates on his wife’s pillow. Which is more intimate? Intimacy is often found in the small gestures of life.

God seeks an intimate relationship with us. Unfortunately, we often seek spectacular and dramatic encounters. In fact, I would say there is a danger of idolizing the spectacular. If I could throw an acorn into a field and an oak tree instantly appeared, you would exclaim, “Wow! That’s incredible.” However, an oak tree growing over hundreds of years is just as amazing and beautiful. The only difference is time. We tend to love dramatic, instant events to the point where we fail to see the Lord working in the small. A drop of water clinging to a leaf is just as miraculous as the parting of the Red Sea. We walk past miracles every day and fail to notice them - people, tiny specks that grew in a womb.

God often speaks to us through delicate, gentle, small things. His answers are so subtle that if you blink, you may miss them. Keep your eyes and ears sensitive to spot his answers.

An example of this is when I first prayed for a “divine surprise.” Later that day, in a café, the barista poured me a large coffee and only charged me for a medium. He also gave me an extra

loyalty stamp. I recognized this as the Lord answering my prayer for a “divine surprise.” If I had been looking for a large divine surprise, like a £20000 cheque, I might have missed his subtle answer. As we recognize his small, subtle answers, he gives us more.

It is written, “Call to me and I will answer you” (Jer 33:3 ESV). He remains faithful to his word. He will answer. But the answer might not come immediately, it might not come in your way, and it might be so subtle you miss it. So stay alert and develop a sensitivity to spot his answers.

- **KEEPS YOUR EYES AND EARS OPEN TO SEE HOW THE LORD SUBTLY REVEALS HIMSELF.**

ACTIVATION

Pray, “Lord, open my eyes to the small intimate ways you are speaking to me. Help me not to idolize the dramatic and spectacular.”

GROUP ACTIVATION

In the gospel of John, the Lord effectively says, “He wants to be loved for simply being him, not for the works he does” (John 10:37-38). Discuss how you can love God for who he is rather than what he does.

Tip #53 IMAGINATION

In Genesis, it is written, “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen 6:5 KJV). That verse does not say that the imagination in itself is evil, but the way of the world before the flood was so evil that evil saturated everyone's imagination. In fact, the Lord sent the flood because the evil use of the imagination had become so powerful it posed a threat to civilization.

In Acts it is written, "Your young men shall see VISIONS, and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17 ESV). God speaks to us via our imagination by painting images there. Just like thoughts, if we ask for a vision, we will often see an image in our mind, and this can be the Lord speaking to us. If we see a still picture, it can evolve into a moving image, like a film, and this is what we call a vision.

In the early stages of my spiritual journey, I used to believe that a vision was a dramatic encounter. In reality, a vision is much more subtle; similar to daydreaming or having a strong mental image.

- **YOUR IMAGINATION IS A POWERFUL TOOL THE LORD GAVE YOU.**

ACTIVATION

1. Pray the following prayer and then observe the first image that comes into your head, "Lord Jesus, in response to the following question, please come and drop a picture into my imagination by your Holy Spirit. How would you like to reveal your love to me today?" *(If you are having difficulty, go back to the section on preparation.)*
2. I would encourage you to write or sketch down what you see.
3. Go a step further and ask different questions observing the images that come into your mind.
4. Ask him to show you more and watch as a picture turns into a vision (a moving image).

GROUP ACTIVATION

Use the above activation to listen for one another. Adjust the question accordingly.

Week 4

Tip #87 INVITATION LANGUAGE

I asked the Lord to hear something from him, and an image of a tomato popped into my head.

"What!?" I thought, "That doesn't make any sense."

This response is common, and in my experience, people tend to continue in the following manner:

- **DISCARD IT:** This doesn't make sense, so it can't be God. It must have been last night's pizza. They then throw away the image.
- **PARK IT:** Well, it doesn't make sense, so I'll write it down and review it. However, often the review never happens.
- **TRY AND FIGURE IT OUT:** Early in my journey, I would try to figure out what a picture meant: "It could be that Jesus is telling me to eat more tomatoes", "It could be that I am supposed to go to Spain because tomatoes are grown there."
- **ASK OTHERS FOR THE INTERPRETATION:** In a similar manner to above, we can run round and ask everyone we know what a tomato could represent. Now we have 20 different opinions, and our head spins with confusion.

The problem here is that we fail to understand the nature of God.

In recent years, I have heard pastors talking about getting a

"Download" from the Lord. While I understand what they are talking about, for me, the word "Download" does not express God's loving relationship. Download is computer terminology. Does a husband give a download to his wife? I hope not. No, a husband woos his wife. God speaks in invitation language.

Picture a husband who picks up a novel, such as Lord of the Rings, to read to his wife. She has never read the book and is not familiar with the story. The husband reads the first page out loud, then the wife says, "I don't understand the story." Well, of course not! Can you imagine if the wife then either DISCARDED THE STORY because she didn't understand it or started TRYING TO FIGURE IT OUT – that would be ridiculous! If the wife wants to understand the story, she must listen to more or find a way of reading more. The first page or chapter of a book is an invitation to the full story.

God doesn't just dump information on us. He woos us; he reads us the first page of a book and then is looking for our response "TELL ME MORE".

In Acts, it is written:

"Your young men shall see VISIONS, and your old men shall dream dreams." (Acts 2:17 ESV)

A picture is often an invitation to the vision. As we ask him for more, he will show us the vision, and, just like the wife is to read more of the book, the understanding will come.

Let's return to the tomato. Instead of discarding the image or trying to figure out the meaning, my simple response was, "SHOW ME MORE LORD."

As I looked at the big, red, ripe tomato, I saw a green vine appear. Immediately I was reminded of the scripture where

Jesus talks about him being the vine and that if we remain in him we bear much fruit. I sensed the Lord say, "Your fruit is ready and ripe."

The key was not throwing the tomato away, but asking him to see more. The tomato had not come from the pizza but from the Lord.

Note: sometimes a static image or picture will be enough to convey all the Lord wants, but to develop a deeper relationship, I would always strongly suggest asking the Lord, "SHOW ME MORE".

- **GOD SPEAKS IN INVITATION LANGUAGE.**
- **A PICTURE IS OFTEN AN INVITATION TO A VISION.**
- **UNDERSTANDING COMES AS WE ASK HIM FOR MORE.**

ACTIVATION

1. Ask the Lord for a picture.
2. Now ask him to show you more.
3. Keep going until you understand.

GROUP ACTIVATION

Using the above activation, ask the Lord for pictures for one another. Don't forget to ask the Lord to show you more. Finally, share your pictures.

Note:

In the parable of the sower, God's word is a seed, not a tree. As we thank him for the seed, the tree grows. Likewise, as we thank him for a picture and ask him to show us more, the image will grow in our imagination, and its meaning (fruit) will become clearer.

Tip #92 DISCERNMENT

What is “discernment”? As humans, we often seek to know if we are right or wrong. Some Christians approach discernment in a particular manner. They receive a word and want to determine if it is right or wrong, so they run to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to ask if the idea is good or evil, right or wrong. “Discernment” should not consist of consulting the tree of knowledge of good and evil. We cannot discern with our carnal minds. Academic knowledge cannot discern spiritual truths.

Instead, discernment should involve running to the tree of life and asking the Father, “What do you want to say about this idea?” For followers of Christ, “Discernment” is about seeking the Lord’s opinion. Only the Holy Spirit can help us discern the truth because spiritual truths must be discerned spiritually.

“The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 2:14 NIV)

In the section on wisdom, we highlighted the problem of trying to discern using earthly wisdom and human sight. If God says, “Purchase breakfast,” then you look in your wallet and say, “I can’t afford it,” you are now weighing what he says by sight and human wisdom. When we receive a word or picture from the unseen realm, we must test it using the unseen realm. In other words, when we receive a word from wisdom, who is a person, we must test the word by taking it back to wisdom.

How do you tell the difference between identical twins? If you only see some identical twins once a year, you may struggle to discern who is who. You become acquainted with the difference between the identical twins by spending time with them. As you

spend time with God, you will get to know his character, what he is likely to say, and what is out of character. Discernment takes time and practice.

“But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” (Heb 5:14 ESV)

- **WE DO NOT DISCERN USING THE FOLLOWING**
 - THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL
 - ACADEMIC REASONING
 - EARTHLY WISDOM
 - EARTHLY SIGHT
- **WE DISCERN BY**
 - GETTING TO KNOW HIM
 - TAKING IT BACK TO HIM
 - SPIRITUAL WISDOM
 - SPIRITUAL SIGHT

A common question when it comes to discernment is: **“Was that just my (soulish) imagination or my own (soulish) thoughts?”** Unfortunately, the spirit of doubt and accusation are behind this question. What we are really saying is, “I doubt I have heard correctly because I can't hear the Lord's voice.” Instead of engaging with doubt, we should engage with the spirit of hope. A better question to ask is as follows: **“Could that have been the Lord speaking? I will consider this carefully and ask if the Lord has more to say. I would hate to discard any of his precious invitations.”**

ACTIVATION

When you next have a word and are unsure whether it is from the Lord, the carnal mind, or the enemy, approach the Lord and pray the following: “Lord, I have had this thought or image, and I

am unsure of its source. I bring it to you. What would you like to say about it?", then wait for him to speak to you in his way and timing.

GROUP ACTIVATION

Discuss how we can avoid trying to discern spiritual things through earthly mindsets.

Tip #118 PRACTICE

Nobody learns to play the piano without practising. Recognizing the voice of God takes time. The more you show a willingness to learn, the more you will recognize the Lord's voice.

If a child only practises the piano during the piano lesson, they don't make much progress. A child has to practise between lessons. And if they are to really improve, go beyond the prescribed homework. Sadly, there will be people who go to prophetic conferences and will do the activations when they are instructed by the speaker, but when they return home never make any effort to individually pursue more.

When I was learning to hear God's voice, I went to a conference. The next day I said to myself, "Right, I am going to make sure I practise this, not wait a week, or a month before picking it up again, but practise it straight away without some speaker directing me to do so." I went to town and said, "Lord I want to practise this." That day I ended up having two words of knowledge for a man and came home full of joy.

- **PRACTISE ALONE.**
- **DON'T WAIT FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO LEAD YOU.**

Be patient with yourself and spend time getting to know the Lord. An art dealer doesn't immediately learn to recognize fake

paintings. It is as they dedicate time getting to know about the character of the true painter, the fakes become obvious.

As you practise, be aware of the times when you successfully recognize his voice. It is important to record our achievements, as this gives us confidence to listen again. Also, it is important to acknowledge and thank him for each success, because “as we are faithful in little, he will give us much more” (Luke 16:10), and subsequently, our ability to recognize his voice will grow.

There are various ways you can practise:

Practise listening for yourself

The first way you can practise listening for yourself is to actually DO the activations in this book. How many books have you read and skipped past the activations or simply read the text without engaging? (I'm guilty!) Go back over each activation in this book and regularly put them into practice.

Secondly, I would recommend you make time in your schedule to practise. What can you cut out of your life to dedicate more time to this? TV and phone scrolling are a time drain.

Thirdly, personally, I would recommend journaling as the most effective way to practise listening to God.

If you are deeply passionate to hear the Lord's voice, also read other teachings and engage with the activations they recommend.

Practise listening for others

One useful way is to practise listening for others. It's actually easier to practise on others because our own biases don't get in the way. If you have a phone, you can do this anywhere and anytime.

Simply take your phone and scroll through your contact list. Ask the Lord to highlight someone, then ask for a simple phrase from the Lord to encourage them. Then send them a short word. You'll be surprised at some of the results.

I have simply texted words like, "The Lord is never in a hurry. He is full of patience". The responses vary. People have often texted back, "Wow, that was incredibly timely."

Because you have no idea what the other person is currently doing, it can be very impactful.

You may find that some people never respond, but do not fret. For every 10 texts sent out, if you only receive one encouraging reply, keep going. Don't become disheartened at those who don't reply, just become encouraged by those who do. For this, you don't need huge amounts of time if you make an effort to text one person each day.

I have done this form of practice on public transport, sat in cafés, or while waiting for something.

To develop slightly longer words, practising on strangers in cafés can work. I often carry blank gift cards with me. I sit and ask the Lord to highlight someone in the café. I then write a card for them. If I feel too shy to see their response, I simply place the card on the table on my way out.

Listening for strangers, is a good way to practise. Just make sure what you write is encouraging and loving.

There are plenty of other ways to practise hearing, but please do practise.

“Whatever you have learned or received or heard

from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.” (Phil 4:9 NIV)

“Practise these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.” (1 Tim 4:15 ESV)

“So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practise what they preach.” (Matt 23:3 NIV)

“But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.” (Matt 7:26 NIV)

Practising is key. Imagine, I went to a skiing slope and only had one lesson, then decided, “I don't like skiing, this is impossible.” In such a case, you would most likely say that I needed to at least have several months of lessons before making up my mind. In a similar way, if you find listening difficult, don't give up, because I can assure you that hearing the voice of God will impact your life in ways you can't even imagine.

ACTIVATION

1. Choose someone in your phone. Ask the Lord what he wants to say to them. Keep your message short.
2. Purchase some blank gift cards. Go to a local café. Ask the Lord to highlight someone. Ask the Lord what he wants to say. If you are too nervous simply give the the card, but if you can muster up more courage wait as they open the card.
3. Find groups so you can practise listening together.
4. When you are next praying for someone, stop and ask the Lord if he has anything to say.

GROUP ACTIVATION

Discuss possible ways you can practise listening to the Lord.

If you'd asked Stephen how to hear God's voice in his early years, his only answer would have been, "By reading the Bible." However, Stephen has learned from many spiritual adventures that there is much more available to us.

This booklet contains 12 tips taken from the book "**Did you stop to listen?**" which contains 120 tips to hear God's voice, along with testimonies, and personal and group activations.

"I have had the pleasure of having something of a ringside seat over recent years, listening in as Stephen has found his way into a deeper relationship of trust and intimacy with Jesus. It's been both encouraging and impactful to hear how God has been taking him deeper in the art of hearing God, and seeing Stephen grow in trust through the journey. Spurred on by Jesus, Stephen has now compiled a treasure trove of 120 tips on hearing God's voice, all taken from his own experiences of pursuing God. I can't recommend the book highly enough - Stephen presents his tips in an easy-to-understand and accessible manner, always from a place of genuine humility. Read it and be encouraged. Better yet, lean in like Stephen - God always has more!" - Andy