

# How to Receive Prophecies

## Hearing from Heaven, Part 1

☑ **Target:** *Learn to use the gift of prophecy!*

### Key Verses

*1 Corinthians 14:1—Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.*

*Proverbs 3:5–6—Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; (6) In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.*

### Suggested Bible Reading

☐ Matthew 10–16

### Other Recommended Reading

☐ *Hearing from Heaven (Get Activated! booklet)*

### Prayer and Praise: “Speak Lord, Your Servant Hears!” (1 Samuel 3:10b)

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Thank You Jesus for how I am learning over and over how much You love me, and how very great Your love is for me, and how much You want to show it to me. I come before You now as young Samuel of old, waiting patiently and quietly for You to speak to Me. Please help me now to cease from my own thoughts and listen to You. Help me to wait patiently to receive Your Words. Help me to trust that You are going to give those Words. Help me to know that it’s not in my own strength, but as I commit myself to You, You will lead and guide. As I ask now and listen to You, I believe You are here for me. Now as I stop for these moments, please help me to hear Your voice.

### Meditation: Daily Food!

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We have a living God, a speaking God!—One who still loves His children, who still speaks to them. His Word says, “Stir up the Gift of God which is in you” (2 Timothy 1:6).

He can speak to any one of us who love Him. As the Lord said on the Day of Pentecost: “In the Last Days I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams” (Acts 2:17).

Every day should be a new day, a new experience, a new listening to the Voice of the Lord. Why just live on yesterday’s food, why not have something fresh every day? You can hear from God every day, and you should be hearing from Him every day.

It doesn’t have to be out loud; it doesn’t have to be with an audible voice. It can just be in that still small voice that you feel inside of you; sometimes it’s not even words, just an impression that you have. God doesn’t even have to communicate in words, He can just give you a feeling or a picture or an idea.

You ought to be hearing everyday. He says, “My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me” (John 10:27).

You might be thinking, “I read the Bible every day, so I hear from the Lord every day.” It’s good that you’re reading the Bible, the recorded Words of the Lord, but it’s wonderful to hear straight from the Lord yourself.

We get too busy sometimes. We get so busy serving Him we forget to love Him. So it is good to try to make it a habit of having some “quiet time” first thing in the morning. Read the Bible and pray.—Start the day off right, hear from the Lord. He’ll solve a lot of the problems before the day even starts if you listen to what He has to say. If you go plunging into all your problems and troubles and your work without stopping to talk to the Lord and get directions from your Commander in Chief, then you’re going to be like a soldier who’s trying to fight the war all on his own without listening to headquarters, with no organization from his chief. You need to have prayer and listen to the Lord.

<To think about> *Do you talk to the Lord and hear from Him fresh before starting the day, or do you go straight into your daily affairs?*

## **Getting to Know the Bible: Prophecy in the Bible**

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### **What is prophecy?**

- Prayer includes listening to God: 1 Samuel 3:9–10; Numbers 9:8; Psalm 4:4b; 46:10a
- When God speaks...: Acts 2:17–18
- One of the Gifts of the Spirit: 1 Corinthians 12:4,10–11
- The desirable gift: 1 Corinthians 14:1,5,39
- Prophecy comes from God: 2 Peter 1:21; Acts 3:21; Hosea 12:10,13; Romans 12:6

### **Prophecy and prophets in the Old Testament**

- In the days of Moses: Numbers 11:24–30
- In Elijah’s time: 1 Kings 18:1,3–4
- Elisha’s schools for prophets: 2 Kings 2:3,5; 2 Kings 4:38; 6:1
- Samuel’s group of prophets: 1 Samuel 19:20

### **The Early Church and the gift of prophecy**

- Prophecy in action: Acts 11:27–30; 13:1–3; 21:8–9; 21:10–14
- A respected ministry in the Early Church: 1 Corinthians 12:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:20; Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 14:29,32; 1 John 4:1

### **God speaks today**

- Counsel: Isaiah 30:21
- Recognizing God’s Voice: 1 King 19:9,11–12

### Mountain Streams: Stop! ... Look! ... Listen!

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*Excerpts from an article by David Berg*

① *To get the most benefit from this article, take the time to look up the Scripture references in your Bible!*

Many Christians today seem to be more concerned in having God hear what they have to say than they are in hearing what God has to say. They're trying to put *their* program across on God and get Him to sign His name to it. The question they should be asking themselves is not: "Can I present my program to God for His signature?" or even, "Am I willing to be presented with God's program for my signature?" but, "Am I willing to sign a blank sheet of paper, and let God fill it in without my even knowing what His program is going to be?"

Christians who don't take time to listen to the Lord remind me of the story of the little girl who had a kitten. One day she heard it purring in its sleep and exclaimed, "Oh Mama, the kitty's gone to sleep and left its engine running!" You may run around and appear to be busy, but still be asleep spiritually and not be getting anywhere, "as one who beats the air" (1 Corinthians 9:26). Unless you get quiet and try to seek the Lord, how are you ever going to hear what the Lord has to say?

I love to be alone with the Lord because then I can hear Him so clearly. I'm convinced that I have heard more from Him when alone, quiet and in a position to listen, than any other way. He can talk to us when we're alone and we can give Him our full attention and the reverence due Him. The Lord speaks in a still, small, but very definite, very firm, very loving voice. But if we're too noisy, we're not going to hear it.

Lord help us to get quiet before Him and listen! We all need quiet times with the Lord, to receive inspiration and instruction from Him. If you really want to hear the Lord, He will talk to you. But in order to hear, you're going to have to get quiet by yourself, somewhere, somehow, sometime. He says, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). How much have you learned about being quiet before the Lord? How many "quiet times" do you have? "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Isaiah 30:15). Do you know what "confidence" means? Confidence is faith! The very fact that you keep quiet shows you have faith. It shows you're expecting God to do something and not trying to do it yourself.

If you don't know what to do, stop everything! Get quiet and wait for *God* to do something. The worst thing in the world you can do is to keep on going when you don't know what to do. That was King Saul's mistake. He kept right on going, even after he didn't know what to do; he figured he had to just keep busy and keep going no matter what—and it lost him the kingdom (1 Samuel 13:7–14).

Getting quiet before the Lord shows you have faith that God is going to handle the situation, that He's going to take care of things. It shows you trust the Lord. "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You" (Isaiah 26:3). If you're not trusting, you're going to be in confusion all the time. As this little poem aptly puts it:

When we're trusting,  
We're not heard to fret.  
When we're fretting,  
We're not trusting yet!

If you're confused, worrying, fretting, and fuming, then you're not trusting. You don't have the faith you ought to have. Trusting is a picture of complete rest and peace of mind, heart, and spirit. You may have to continue working, but your attitude and spirit is calm.

When you truly trust the Lord, you can have peace in the midst of storm and calm in the eye of the hurricane. It reminds me of an art contest that was held in which the artists were asked to illustrate peace. Most of the contestants handed in paintings of quiet, calm scenes of the countryside—absolute tranquility. Well, that’s a form of peace. But the hardest kind of peace to have was illustrated in the picture that won the award. It depicted the roaring, raging, foaming rapids of a storm-swollen waterfall, and on a little tree branch overhanging the torrent was a nest, where a tiny bird sat, peacefully singing in spite of the raging river. That’s when your faith gets tested, in the midst of turmoil. Quietness is a sign of faith.

Moses had several million people sitting out in the middle of the desert, waiting for him and tearing their hair, wondering, “What are we going to eat? What are we going to drink? Where are we going? What are we going to do?” And what did Moses do? He climbed to the top of a mountain and stayed there alone with the Lord for 40 days!

What if he had been fretting all the time, “What if something happens? I have to get back. What if Aaron makes a golden calf?”—Which he *did*! And when Moses *did* get upset and broke the stone tablets on which God had written the Ten Commandments, he had to go back up the mountain and get quiet for *another* 40 days! What good did it do for him to get upset? He might as well have come down and taken it quietly and calmly. It would have saved him another 40 days on the mountain! (Exodus 24:12–18, and chapters 32 and 34.)

Jesus, on the eve of His ministry, went out and spent 40 days and nights in the wilderness, and it seemed like He spent much of the time with the Devil. He had to defeat the Devil first (Matthew 4: 1–11). If you don’t get alone with the Lord and beat the Devil first, you never get far.

It took Noah 120 years to build the Ark. I wonder how much of that was spent in prayer? He must have taken some time with the Lord, or he never could have gotten all the precise instructions on how to build the vessel. God probably gave him the *exact* specifications for every part of that boat. And Noah just went calmly about his business, building the Ark. He could have panicked and hastily slapped it together, thinking rain was coming any minute, but he didn’t. He took 120 years to build the Ark. Many of us would probably think we were spending a lot of time preparing for something if we just spent 120 days on it. It sure showed that Noah had faith! (Genesis 6:11–22 and chapter 7; Hebrews 11:7).

They say that farmers often make the best missionaries because they don’t expect everything in one day. They live next to God’s creation and are dependent on the Lord. Farmers have a lot of patience and faith in the long process of waiting for the plants to grow or the animals to produce. They just have to trust the Lord and not worry about it. God does the biggest part of the job: He sends the sun and rain and makes the crops grow, and He’s the One that causes the animals to produce.

If there’s any picture of a quiet type of personality, it’s the farmer. City folks often make fun of farmers, but if the farmers didn’t take it slow, they’d go crazy like many of the city people! The farmer’s motto is “Go slow.” The farmer is a perfect example of faith and patience. We should take a lesson from the farmer.

Why is it that so few people want to live on a farm these days?—Because it takes too much dependence on God. They have to leave so much up to the Lord. In many countries, people are moving off the farms in droves. God’s too much in control. It’s too quiet—“too dead, no action,” they say. But if they took time to really look around and listen—to watch the animals, the trees and the storms, and to listen to the thunder—they’d see and hear a lot.

Some people have to be in motion all the time; they’ve got to be *doing* something! I think one reason for this is that they don’t want to *think*! That’s why they have so many “amusements.” Do you know what that word means?—“Away from thinking!” People are terrified of the quiet and stillness because they know the voice of God might come through. So the Devil keeps their mind, eyes and ears filled with noise and violent sights and sounds.

That’s one reason why large cities are such a curse—so much noise and confusion! They’re largely man-made environments, with hardly a tree or a blade of grass. Many people live and work where they can’t even see the sky, the sun, the moon, or the stars. The noise is continual: traffic, sirens, screeching trains and subways. Children raised in large cities often develop hearing problems

because they live in an atmosphere of constant noise, whereas children who live in the country usually have very keen hearing.

Just so, if you live in an atmosphere of spiritual and physical confusion, you'll eventually develop a hardness against the voice of God, because to hear Him you have to learn to block out all the noises around you. But if you live in a quiet, peaceful environment, your ears become more sensitive to the few sounds around you—very keen and sharp—and it's also easier to hear the Lord when He speaks to your heart or mind.

Think of the years Abraham, "the father of faith" (Romans 4:11,16), spent out in the fields watching flocks. No wonder he heard from the Lord.—He had time to listen.

Lord forgive us, we get so busy! If you're too busy to pray, you're *too* busy! If you're too busy to get alone with God and pray, you're too busy! It's as if a servant told his king, "I'm sorry, I can't come and listen to your orders today, I'm too busy *servicing* you!" The most important job you have is listening to the King—to stop, look, and listen. You need to learn to *listen* to the Lord most of all.

It's not up to the king to go chasing after his subjects, screaming and hollering at them to try to get them to follow his instructions. Rather, his subjects should come to the king with quietness and respect, present their petitions, and then wait silently for the king's answer. You need to respect and reverence the Lord, and treat Him like the King He is. Sometimes Christians can get so familiar with the Lord and His Spirit that this familiarity breeds contempt. The Lord is so sweet and close to them that they don't respect Him like they should.

A lot of Christians start playing with the gifts of God or the gifts of the Spirit, and neglect God Himself. It's like parents coming home with gifts for their children, and the kids grab the presents, forget to greet and thank their parents, and start playing with the toys.

It also reminds me of the story of the little girl who wanted to make her father a present for his birthday. Each evening, instead of spending her usual time with her father, she worked on making him new bedroom slippers—and she nearly broke his heart! God may appreciate the bedroom slippers you're making for Him, but He'd rather have *you!* And the truth is, you'll probably make an awful mess out of those slippers if you neglect your time with Him!

My mother used to tell about how she had gotten so busy with the Lord's work that she wasn't listening enough to Him, so He had to let her get so sick she *had* to give Him her full attention! When she was flat on her back, sick in bed, that was the only direction that she could look—straight up!

God will not take second place, even to His service! He says, "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God" (Exodus 20:3,5). That is probably the greatest mistake of sincere Christians: to make a god of God's service! All this action, all this noise, all this effort—and so little of God!

We used to sing this little song:

Let go and let God have His wonderful way,  
Let go and let God have His way!  
He'll fill with His Spirit and keep day by day.  
Let go and let God have His way!

It's a lot easier for you to just let go and let *God* do it—and you show you're "letting go" by getting quiet before the Lord. You show that you have faith by stopping your own activity and waiting for God to work. "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). "Study to be quiet" (1 Thesalonians 4:11 KJV). "Let all the earth keep silence before Him" (Habakkuk 2:20). There was even silence in Heaven on one occasion (Revelation 8:1).

When Moses was a smart young man, 40 years of age, he really thought he knew how to do the job—but he made a terrible mess out of it and had to run for his life! It took God 40 years to straighten Moses out and show him that he had to depend on Him (Exodus chapters 2 and 3).

Hurry is often a sign that you're afraid you're going to be late—which means you have fear, which means you haven't got enough *faith*. If you're late, take it easy! Trust the Lord! One reason we hurry when we're late is because it's probably our own fault, and we don't want to suffer the consequences.

Another reason we hurry is that we're not trusting the Lord. We're afraid that if we don't get to our destination, we're going to miss something. We can't trust God that He's able to hold up the whole world or stop the sun, like Joshua had Him do (Joshua 10:12–14).

One time when I was rushing to catch a train, the Lord warned me that the strain I was putting myself under could kill me. So I put the matter in the Lord's hands, asked Him to delay the train, and relaxed and took my time. I made it to the station, boarded the train, and sat there for 40 minutes, wondering why the always punctual train had not yet left the station. I finally asked the Lord and He told me, "You asked Me to *stop* the train, but you didn't tell Me you wanted to *leave* yet!"

"The hurrier I go, the behinder I get!" Just relax, slow down, don't rush, don't be hasty, and the Lord will slow everything else down for you if necessary.

Look at all the examples in the Bible of patience: Job, Moses, and David, to name a few. David spent 24 years working under that old blunderbuss, King Saul, and the Lord really taught him a lot from Saul's bad example. Saul often became impatient and tried to do things in his own strength, and he found he wasn't strong enough. David learned that he had to let *God* do everything, and wait for Him.

Some people remind me of King Saul. They ask the Lord something and if they don't get an answer right away, they just go ahead and do the best they can. Look what happened when Saul didn't wait for the Lord's blessing through the prophet Samuel. Saul went ahead with the dedication ceremony himself, instead of waiting for the Lord or His prophet, and Saul lost a battle and the whole kingdom as a result (1 Samuel 13:7–14).

So slow down! Stop! ... Look! ... Listen! Wait for the Lord—especially if you don't know what to do and haven't heard from the Lord yet. Where did John the Baptist show up from—the big city of Jerusalem? Is that where he got his education, his anointing, his great power? No! He came out of the desert, out of the woods, out of the wilderness, where he had time to get away from the crowd and hear from the Lord. And when he finally came, he sure had something to say! (Luke 3: 1–21, 24–28).

Jesus spent 30 years of His life in preparation and only a little over three years in His public ministry. We're in such a hurry!

The apostle John wrote the Gospel of John, and it must have taken some time with the Lord to do it. However, John's greatest masterpiece was virtually written by the Lord, while John was in exile on an island—the book of Revelation. His biggest work was just letting God do all the directing, the speaking, the revealing—*everything!* Let's slow it down! Stop! ... Look! ... Listen!

The world is always in a hurry! That's the Devil's own plan: "Speed up the world!—Anything to make everything move faster!" God created the earth 6,000 years ago, and it has hardly varied in its speed since then. *God* never got in a hurry. It's still revolving the same rate every day. God hasn't speeded up the seasons or the years, but man is speeding things up—and the result is a world hell-bent for destruction!

So let's try to slow things down. Relax! But most of all, stop, look, listen ... and *wait!* Warning signs like this are posted at dangerous places, such as railroad crossings—places of crisis where there is an interruption of your routine, your way, your road, your highway—otherwise you might drive across the train tracks and get hit by a train.

"But," you say, "I don't have *time* to stop, look and listen!" Well, if you don't, you may never make it. Better late than never! Which is easier, to try to beat the train, to try to plough through the train, to jump over the train—or to stop for a few minutes and watch it go by? It'll soon be gone, and you can go peacefully on your way.

Trying to force the situation and push your way through just won't work! It doesn't pay to rush around trying to get someplace or to do something when you're supposed to be waiting on the Lord to find out where He wants you to be and what He wants you to do.

The Lord wants to teach you to make decisions. The first step in making a decision is not to try to reason it out in your mind or discuss the situation with others. The first step is to ask the Lord. God likes for you to give Him a little honor. Prayer is not just speaking your piece, but most of all letting God speak His piece, and waiting in quietness and confidence until He does.

You've got to get not only in prayer, but you've got to get in the Spirit. You've got to put aside your own thoughts and partake of the Lord's Spirit, through communion with Him. If you'll do that, He'll tell you what you're supposed to do. You've got to know that you can't do it and be desperate for God's answer, and then you've got to stop everything else and listen. Getting quiet before the Lord shows that you have faith that God is going to handle the situation, that He's going to take care of things. Take time to hear from God, and He'll take time to straighten out the problem. Your feverish activity is nothing, your service is nothing, if you don't give the King your attention, your love, your time, your communion.

Remember that hurry is lack of faith and is of the Devil! If you're hurrying and rushing around, fretting and impatient, you'll never be able to focus your full attention—your eyes, ears, mind, and heart—on the Lord for the solutions to your problems, the answers to your questions, the best decisions for your situation! But when you have learned to stop, look, listen, and wait in communion with Him until you get His answers, you will have learned how to make decisions! You will have learned to pray and to truly follow God.

He gives the very best to them who leave the choices up to Him!