

How Do We Hear God Speak?

All Christ followers have the ability to hear God. With this said, it does not mean that all Christ followers are prophets.

Acts 2:17-18, "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days and they will prophesy."

This passage seems to be saying that all Christ followers can hear from God.

Paul says in I Corinthians 12:29, "are all Prophets?" This passage seems to be implying that we are not all prophets.

I am making this distinction between hearing God and prophecy although the bible does not. Those who excel in the prophetic gift will usually hear from God more frequently and in more of the ways we will describe below. As you read through the list notice the progression from ways all Christ followers can hear from God to ways only the prophetically gifted can hear from God. With this said, keep in mind the principle that *God does whatever God wants to do*. Therefore, He can talk to whomever He wants, whenever He wants, however He wants.

1. Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20, I Corinthians 2:12)

- We understand the Bible the same way it was written, by the Spirit. Therefore, the Spirit illuminates (makes known or helps us to understand) the Bible to those who are Christ followers. This does not mean that the Spirit explains the one correct systematic theology to us. It does mean that the Spirit helps us to understand who God/Jesus is and how to live for Him. This is both at the cognitive and heart level.

2. Nature (Psalm 19:1-4, Romans 1:18-20)

- God speaks through Nature. At this level of revelation He makes known to us that he exists.

3. Salvation (I Corinthians 12:1-3)

- We cannot come to Jesus without responding to the call of God to Jesus by the Holy Spirit. This means that at some level we have heard and responded to God.

4. Conscience (Romans 9:1)

- The Holy Spirit is not our conscience but he does speak through our conscience, or confirms to us truth through our conscience

5. Providence (2 Corinthians 2:12)

- **Definition of Providence:** "Divine guidance or care"

- In the case of 2 Cor 2:12, it is seen not heard.

- God's providential leading is His capacity to lead and guide us through the arranging of events, see (John 5: 19-20).

6. Bringing things to mind (John 14:25-26)

- The Holy Spirit communicates to us by helping us remember truth we have previously learned.

7. Impressions (Acts 27:9-11)

- An impression is an internal sense that causes you to feel, think or know something by the Holy Spirit.

8. Pictures (internal and external – Jeremiah 1:11, Amos 8:1)

- Sight which is granted by God consisting of a picture or collection of pictures carrying a literal or symbolic message.

9. Visions (Isaiah 6:1-6, Acts 10:3, Acts 9:10-12, Acts 16:9)

- Supernatural sight where you see a clip of something either literal or symbolic. A vision often feels as real as reality, were as a picture is less intense.

10. Dreams (Genesis 20:3, Genesis 37:5-6, 1 Kings 3:5, Matthew 1:18-21, Matthew 27:19)

- A revelation given during sleep when the natural senses are inoperative and God can bypass our resistance.

- Dreams are often directional when they are from God.

11. Voice (Luke 3:22, Matthew 17:5-8, Mark 1:11)

- The voice of God can be experienced either externally or internally. The voice of God is not a strong impression, but an experience where we can clearly make out clear and distinct words.

12. Prophetic Utterance (Matthew 10:19-20)

- The Lord giving you the words as you speak, but not before you speak.

13. Angels (Genesis 16:9, Joshua 5:13-15, Matthew 28:1-7, Acts 8:26, Acts 12:6-10)

- An angel can appear in a dream or vision, but can also appear in your every day walk through life.