



## Applied Faith Men's Bible Study

South Hills Baptist Church

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# Abraham, Hearing the Voice of God

## Lesson #1

Genesis 11:27-12:5

The story of God calling Abram took place before there was any organized system of religion. There was no church, no Scripture, no Law, no rules, rituals or regulations . . . just a relationship with God, the Creator, and people worshiped Him in various ways (sacrifices, etc.). But, worship flowed out of a response of love rather than obligation to a religious code. It was during this time that God calls Abram.

God asked Abram to respond in obedience to something that seemed to have no reason or logic behind it. But, because of God's goodness and the relationship between them, Abram chose to trust God and follow His instructions without knowing what the result might be. Thus, God blessed him mightily. In Romans 4, Paul even refers to Abram (Abraham) as the "father of us all" through faith, and it's by his

faith that God's promises are transferred to us. Responding appropriately in faith is an important part of our Christian walk, so it's necessary to look to Abraham as our model.

The beginning of Abram's (later renamed Abraham by God) relationship with God was his ability to hear God's voice. Without this having occurred, the rest of the story of the Bible would have ceased to exist as we know it. Hearing God's voice is key, if not crucial, in each of our lives. Let's take a closer look at how we can each adopt this skill that Abraham displayed, so that we can each have a significantly deeper and more meaningful relationship with not only God our Father, but with every other relationship in our lives.

One of the greatest benefits of our salvation must be that of hearing God speak to us personally. There can be no intimate relationship with our heavenly Father without it. But, as easy as it is for us to speak to Him, the average Christian has a hard time hearing His voice. This is not the way the Lord intended it to be.

Learning to clearly distinguish God's voice is invaluable. Instead of going through life blindly, we can have the wisdom of God guide and protect us. There isn't a single person receiving this letter who couldn't have their life radically transformed by hearing the voice of the Lord better. The worst marital problem is one word from the Lord away from a total turnaround. If you have sickness or disease, one living word from the Lord will instantly heal you. If you are in financial crisis, the Lord knows exactly how to turn your situation around. It's just a matter of hearing His voice.

The Lord constantly speaks to us and gives us His direction. It's never the Lord who is not speaking, but it's us who are not hearing. Jesus made some radical statements about hearing His voice in John

10:3-5. He was speaking about Himself as the Shepherd of the sheep and the only way to enter the sheepfold.

“The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.”

Notice that He said in verse 3, His sheep listen to His voice. He didn’t say His sheep CAN hear His voice or SHOULD hear His voice. He made the emphatic statement that His sheep DO hear His voice. Most Christians would question the accuracy of that statement since their experiences don’t line up. But it’s not what Jesus said that is wrong; all true believers can and do hear the voice of God; they just don’t recognize what they are hearing as being God’s voice.

Radio and television stations transmit twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week; but we only hear them when we turn the receiver on and tune it in. Failure to hear the signal doesn’t mean the station isn’t transmitting. Likewise, God is constantly transmitting His voice to His sheep, but few are turned on and tuned in. Most Christians are busy pleading with God in prayer to transmit when the problem is with their receivers.

The first thing we need to do is fix our receivers — believe that God is already speaking and start listening. However, that takes time, effort, and focus. The average Christian’s lifestyle is so busy, it isn’t conducive to hearing God’s voice. For instance, what is your typical

answer to the question, “How are you?” Many of you probably answer something about being very busy. I often say, “I’m busier than a one-arm paper hanger.” All of us seem to be busier than ever, and that’s one of the BIG reasons we don’t hear the voice of the Lord better. We’re just too busy.

Psalm 46:10 says, “Be still, and know that I am God.”

It’s in stillness, not busyness, that we tune our spiritual ears to hear the voice of God. The Lord always speaks to us in that “STILL, small voice” (1 Kings 19:12, emphasis mine), but often it’s drowned out amid all the turmoil of our daily lives.

Second, and this is very important, most often we mistake the voice of the Lord for our own thoughts. That’s right. I said the voice of the Lord comes to us in our own thoughts.

John 4:24 says, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

This is saying that communication with God is Spirit to spirit, not brain to brain or mouth to ear, the way we communicate in the physical realm. The Lord speaks to our spirits, not in words, but in thoughts and impressions. Then our spirits speak to us in words like, “I think the Lord wants me to do this or that.” The Lord doesn’t typically say “You do this or that,” but He will impress your spirit to do something, and then your spirit says, “I think I should do . . .” Therefore, we often miss the leading of the Lord, thinking it’s our own thoughts.

Every one of us has done something stupid and afterwards said, “I knew that was the wrong thing to do.” We didn’t feel right about our decision, but we followed logic or pressure only to find that our impression was actually the Lord speaking to us.

I was married once before Chandra. We were to be married in Jamaica. The night before our wedding, my best man and myself were on the beach. I told him I knew in my heart that I was making a terrible decision marrying this woman. But in a show of cowardice and complete disobedience, I married her anyways. Being in a foreign county and the thought of having to spend time with her and possibly travel back with her after calling off the wedding, convinced me to proceed with the ceremony. The result of not listening to what I now know was God’s voice speaking to me, was a terrible seven-and-a-half-year marriage, and a separation from my two sons that weighs on me every single day. Also, the decreased influence on my sons cannot be overstated and will continue to rear its ugly head as they get older.

I am convinced that our gracious heavenly Father speaks to every one of His children constantly, giving us all the information and guidance we need to be total overcomers. There isn’t a problem with His transmitter; it’s our receiver that needs help.

## Questions

To increase our Biblical knowledge, we must learn about the men that we intend to model ourselves after. The following are questions for you to find in your Bible or elsewhere concerning Abram/Abraham.

1. Who was Abram's (Abraham) father?
2. Who were Abram's brothers?
3. Who was Abram's wife?
4. Who was Abram's nephew?
5. Where did Abram live originally?
6. What kingdom or empire was this city in?
7. What was Abram's profession?
8. At what approximate time frame did Abram live?
9. What family members did Abram leave with?
10. How old was Abram when he left with his family?
11. What city did they travel to first?

Can you think of ways or techniques that would equip you to hear the voice of God?

## Application/Activity

I want you to attempt to bring at least one person to class next Tuesday. If you can't don't worry about it. But attempt to ask as many people as you feel comfortable with. Ask at least one person, no matter how uncomfortable. Feel free to ask any male member of our church who did not come the night of introduction.