

## "If You'd Only Listen" (Psalm 81)

Our God is a speaking God. His delight in revealing Himself to us is implied in His heartbreak and grief over our refusal to listen to Him (vv 8,11,13). Often, he is speaking and we don't know that it is Him. The story of Samuel in I Samuel 3 reminds us of this. Jacob's experience in Gen 28:16 is more common than we think, "Surely the Lord was in this place and I didn't know it!" At times, we suspect or even know it is God, but, we don't like what we hear, so we do not "obey" or "walk in His ways" (vv 11,13).

How does God speak to us? Anyway He wants to! A partial sampling in the Bible includes: creation, visions/dreams, angels, people, phenomena, impressions/ideas, circumstances, scriptures, audible voices, and, most clearly, through His Son (Heb 1:1-2; Jo 1:18). He has given His children ears to hear (Jo 8:47; 10:27; Matt 11:15) so the real questions are:

- How intentional are we in listening for God? (Heb 11:6 tells us He rewards those who diligently seek Him.)
- What puts us in the best position possible to hear God? (Lk 8:18 reminds us to "take care how we listen.")

It seems we are most likely to hear God when we HAVE A SENSE OF EXPECTANCY (I Sam 3:10; Micah 7:7; Hab 2:1). We're not going to listen for a voice we do not believe is there. When we learn to be "present" to God in every circumstance of life, every moment is sacramentalized, every event may convey His revelation to us. Every meal, criticism, gift of kindness, emotional response may become the sound of His voice. Ps 81:16 reminds us that when we are between a rock and a hard place, instead of asking God to immediately take the rocks away we are to expect and search for the honey in the rock!

We hear God more clearly when we believe HE IS LOVE, that He is always loving us (Deut 6:24; I Jo 4:8,19; Rev 2:4; 3:20). We readily invite in and listen to those we believe have our best interest in mind. If we only see God as a Boss, Teacher, Taskmaster - and not Love, we may stop listening for one we can never seem to please.

When we listen with A SINGLE HEART, a single mind, a "this one thing" mentality, we hear better. Our God is not only Love, He is Lord! (Acts 2:36) Often, we ask God for something but do not hear because we ask with wrong motives (Ja 4:3). We ask to discover our options, to pursue our self-interested objectives, reserving the right to decide for ourselves how we will choose. Such double-mindedness should expect to hear nothing (Ja 1:7-8). When we present ourselves to God with a non-selective readiness to hear and obey, our ears will often open up.

Finally, we seem to hear best when we listen in order to be USED BY GOD for His purposes (II Co 12:15). Revelation is for lovers (Jo 14:21). When we listen to be a blessing to others, we will hear far more than we listen only to be ourselves blessed.

Take care this month "how" you listen!



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## Praise Reports & Prayer Requests

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# GREETINGS



# CALENDAR



We apologize for the confusion over our newsletter paper. We did find another case of the thicker paper, so we're not sure which you will be receiving. Either way, we hope you are blessed by the contents! (You can always receive an electronic copy by request at OICnewsletter@gmail.com)

As schools on most every level "fire up" again for a new year, do not forget to pray for our brothers and sisters who are teachers and administrators in one of our most important mission fields and battle grounds. They are truly lights who shine in the darkness, often voices crying in the wilderness - certainly sent ones of God in what is often a dry and dusty (and underappreciated) land.

Many of us who are not "professional educators" can also be at work in these valuable fields by volunteering - tutors, office aides, media assistants. Our churches can purchase supplies for those unable to afford them, provide appreciation gifts/breakfast for teachers/staff. The fields of our communities are white unto harvest - "Lord, send your laborers into the fields."

## AUGUST

4-8 Tyler, TX (903-561-9995)  
12,19,26 CCF  
14 Alachua Study  
28 Ocala Study

## SEPTEMBER

14-21 Chama, NM (386-418-0913)  
28-30 Binghamton, NY (607-625-4612)

## OCTOBER

5-6 Vero Beach, FL (772-563-0430)  
17-19 Panama City, FL (850-348-3292)

## NOVEMBER

7-10 Baton Rouge, LA (225-769-8844)

## ♥ PRAISE & PRAYER ✝

♥ For our teachers/school personnel

♥ For our campus ministries

✝ For renewed and revitalized "ears"

✝ For a non-selective readiness to hear and obey

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