

Chapter 1 : Discerning the Voice of God: How to Recognize When God is Speaking by Priscilla Shirer

Discerning God's Voice One of the biggest keys to living the abundant life is to know the voice of your Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Praying for discerning of spirits and the gift of wisdom is first and foremost a good first step.

I had read another book by this author late in and really enjoyed it, so I was excited to read something else from Priscilla Shirer. This study version was very good. I really loved how many Scriptures were included and how this author encouraged the reader to study them even more beyond the study. I especially enjoyed t This new revised version of the book, Discerning the Voice of God: I especially enjoyed the study on the prophet, Habakkuk late in the study, as well as the study of Abraham. It really brought their individual stories to life and encouraged me as I studied them more in depth. I walked away from this study having come to realize the amazing character of my God in my life. God is faithful, and while I am waiting for His next direction, I need to do the next thing and trust Him that He will be faithful to provide for my needs, both physical and spiritual. But, of course, that is my own personal opinion. I give this book 5 stars for an excellent Bible study that greatly encouraged me! No burning bush stops them in their tracks. No angel knocks on the door with a letter from God. Priscilla Shirer, daughter of Dr. Tony Evans and a minister, tackles the problem of how we may recognize the voice of God with certainty. This version is the eleventh edition of this book revised and expanded. The first chapter pace moves a little slowly, but it picks up as the reader goes to the later chapter Too often, Christians fret concerning whether they know the will of God. The first chapter pace moves a little slowly, but it picks up as the reader goes to the later chapters. The author mentions her experiences to illustrate, though often in general language. I wanted to know what new ministry. Discerning the Voice of God would work well as a study guide for a group--probably its purpose. The reader will enjoy the book more by reading a chapter at a time which would fit well as a daily addition to devotions. Most Christians will find something new, and feel more secure in making decisions. I received this book from Moody Publisher. It is an honest review.

Chapter 2 : Discerning the voice of God “ Heather C. King “ Room to Breathe

Discerning God's Voice (Judges). Finally, in Lesson 5 we studied Gideon's putting a fleece before the Lord. We examined ways to discern whether it is God speaking, rather than one of the other voices in our heads.

Important decisions have to be made. Families with older teens have to decide on college or other alternatives. This time can be very stressful for both parents and children. Often times, parents have preconceived ideas about what the next step should be. The children who are fast becoming young adults feel they should have a say about their future. As our teens grow older, we have to trust and believe we have taught them right from wrong and given them the tools they need to make the right decisions. Somewhere along the line, we have to let go and let God. I truly believe in quieting down and asking for discernment as we direct our teens. Relax and support your teen in prayer even as you calmly discuss the various options they have. Sometimes they arrive at the exact same goal you wanted them to, without going through all the turmoil and anger that happens if they feel like they are being forced to follow your decision. Be supportive Parents can become bitterly disappointed as their teens go in a completely different direction from what they expected. Kenneth had always talked about going to medical school and his parents had proudly told all their friends about their future doctor. Unfortunately, once in college, he realized that he did not really want to be a doctor. It took forever for him to inform his parents because he was afraid that they would be so disappointed in him. The parents as expected were very disappointed but very soon realized that this was in the best interest of their child and they were very supportive. There are times when parents are not so supportive. Some force their children into career choices that they hate and this ultimately puts a strain on their relationship. Some teens have flunked out of college after their parents forced them to go and they ultimately float around not knowing what the next step in life should be. If your child is not asking do something utterly ridiculous, be supportive. Even if they fail, they will learn valuable life lessons and be more likely to self-correct. Help them discern what the next step is. Otherwise, every not so right decision is a lesson learned, that helps them accept responsibility for their mistake, learn from it and become better and stronger as a result of that. Always remember that you have made mistakes along the way too. Keep an open door policy. Always receive them with open arms, no matter what. Even as we make mistakes and expect the good Lord to forgive us, so should we learn to leave the past behind and welcome back our children. Several years ago, I had a patient whose father threw her out of their home because she got pregnant at a young age with an older man of a different race. With his support, she eventually graduated from high school and they eventually got married. The girl never felt she was welcome back home even when her mom started visiting her secretly. Can you imagine the loss of your daughter because she made a mistake and how sad to not experience the joy and love of grandchildren. Always keep an open door policy. Your children will respect and love you for that. They will approach life with more enthusiasm and veracity because they know you will always welcome them back, no matter what. As your teens mature and have to make hard decisions, pray for discernment as you guide them. Let go and believe that God is leading your teen. Their decision may not be exactly what you had in mind but it may be the best for them. Help them pick up the pieces as they learn from their mistakes and move on. Have an open door policy and always welcome them back, no matter the missteps they make along the way. The prayer for discernment and wisdom should not be long absent from our lips even as we continue to guide our teens.

Chapter 3 : Discerning God's voice as we direct our teens | Parenting Teenagers Online

Third, God's voice is not the voice of obscurity. Sometimes people make it a lot harder to hear God than it should be. They think that God is going to talk to them in obscure riddles or other.

I had problems with the heat, and the manager noticed, and sent me home. I just prayed, told the Lord that I was in some trouble, and I needed help. There was no voice, no magic sign, no light from above. I went to bed. The next morning at 8 AM, the phone rang. A company I had applied for a job at, more than 2 months prior, called and had me come in for an interview, and two days later, they hired me. I went to the part store, and picked up a wiper motor, and then went to where she worked, and started working on her car. It was actually raining that very day, and she had driven to work in the rain, without windshield wipers. If you have ever driven anywhere without wipers in the rain, you know how dangerous that is. So I started working on this car, but this was a foreign model car, and I was completely lost as to how to replace the wiper motor. I worked and worked, for about an hour and 15 minutes. Finally I realized I had no idea whatsoever, how to replace the wiper motor. I just stood there, hunched over the front of the car, and prayed real quick, Lord So literally in that very moment that I prayed this, the screw driver in my hand, slid over hitting a wire, a few sparks flew off, and the wipers jerked forward I just shuddered with my eyes closed, and said "Thank you Lord". The wipers jerked forward because the motor was good, and sparks proved the wiring and electricity was good. My screw driver shorted the wire from the motor, bypassing the connection. What had happened was the connection was so rusty, that it stopped making contact. All I had to do was take the nut off, and remove the wire, clean it and remove the rust, put it back on, and the wipers worked perfectly. I returned the motor, and got my money back. In both cases, I never heard any voices. No shining light from heaven, or singing angels. Just clear obvious, direct answers to prayer. Thank you for your stories. I have had instances similar to that, I guess I just expected a booming voice to come out of nowhere.

Chapter 4 : How can we recognize the voice of God?

*Hear from some of the most well-known Christians in history about how God speaks to them, and discover for yourself how you can discern the voice of God. One of Priscilla's best-selling titles, *Discerning the Voice of God* is now completely revised, with updated content and reflection questions.*

Where should I go to school? Should I take this job, or is there something better on the horizon? Who should I marry? Life is a never-ending series of choices. Can we know whether we are making the right decisions? Should we consult our horoscope? Maybe we should call the psychic hot-line? Do we go with what the experts are saying or rely on our gut-feeling? Should we look to the stars -- or should we seek the Maker of the stars? I have yet to read any book or article that can lay that out. Anyone who can present a way one can actually know that the voice they are hearing is from GOD, not man or Satan, would change the world. God wants to fellowship and communicate with us. How do we get to know a person? By communicating with them. By talking and listening. He talks, we listen. We talk, He listens. God loves us so much that He sent Jesus to take our place and to die for us. He did this so that we could once again have fellowship with Him. He also wants us to be fulfilled, blessed and successful in the plan that He has established for our lives -- so that we can be a reflection of His love and blessing in the Earth. He wants to talk to us. And He wants us to listen and talk to Him, too. There is more good news -- we can hear His voice. Jesus tells us in John One day the producer and I traveled to a video shoot with a young woman who worked in the donor relations department. Along the way she told us that, at the urging of her father, she had recently purchased a flat with two apartments. Still uncomfortable with the big step she had just taken she thought out loud, "How do you know if you are making the right decisions in life? We can have confidence that we will hear His voice. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 8: We have further assurance of this promise in Psalm Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds him with His hand. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. God will reveal Himself to those who humbly seek Him. The Lord manifests Himself to us and through us as we humbly seek Him. The familiar passage in Proverbs 3 makes it even more plain. My friend pointed out in his e-mail to me that there are three different voices that we can hear -- and he is absolutely correct. In fact, there are three voices that we can hear -- the voice of God, the voice of our own fleshly desires, and the voice of the Devil. But Jesus tells us in John Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers. It is by practicing, by reason of use, that we are able to discern whether what we hear is of God, our flesh, or the Devil. Our own flesh can scream pretty loud especially when we are under pressure, or we want something very badly. And the Devil is the father of lies -- he is the great deceiver. The Bible gives us seven basic keys or filters through which every possible leading should be judged. We are to carefully examine the thoughts and intentions of our hearts -- and the words of godly people who may have influence on us by their words and actions -- through the use of these seven keys: The Holy Spirit speaking to our heart: I will put my laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. The Prophetic word of knowledge, word of wisdom, personal prophecy: But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good" I Thessalonians 5: The peace of God: And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working; for by trade they were tent-makers" Acts Many times the Lord will confirm His direction to us through three, four or more of these keys -- especially when we are in the process of making an important, life-changing decision. The bottom line, as Pat Robertson has said for years, is that big decisions take big prayer. Because God loves us and wants us to relate to Him, He has given us these clear principles in the Bible to guide us. The New Testament talks of the early disciples -- people like Paul, Aquila and Priscilla -- as people who heard the voice of God. My friend who wrote the e-mail will be happy to know that this was the report made of them: Yes, my friend, you can hear and know the voice of God. Share your testimony of how you have grown to know the voice of God. Send me an e-mail with your comments.

Samuel heard the voice of God, but did not recognize it until he was instructed by Eli (1 Samuel). Gideon had a physical revelation from God, and he still doubted what he had heard to the point of asking for a sign, not once, but three times (Judges ,).

Can we hear the voice of God? Biblical advice to help you develop an intimate relationship with God. Do you long to hear the voice of God? Hearing the voice of God seems to be a real challenge for many Christians. In this article you will discover many useful tips, that will help you discern the voice of God. The first principle we all must establish in our hearts is that God does indeed speak today, and He longs for us to learn how to recognize His voice, in the midst of all the noises of this world. One of the worst lies Christians have believed is that God stopped speaking when the Bible was published. Nothing could be further from the truth. God is a person who wants to have a real relationship with you and me. Relationship is only possible when there is communication. It will bring life saving blessings and strength to you and your beloved ones! The voice of God today. Many Christians have heard in their churches that God does not speak anymore today. We see throughout the Bible that God speaks: We are not less than the men or women of God in the Bible! We can develop an intimate heart-to-heart relationship with God as well, if we truly want to. In fact He said that the ability to recognize his voice is the hallmark of every true follower of Jesus Christ. My sheep listen to my voice. Yet many Christians have learned that God stopped speaking to us, since the Bible was put together. This teaching goes directly against the truth revealed in the Bible that God desires to speak to us and wants us to learn to hear his voice. The voice of God is heard more than ever. Since Pentecost we are living in a time that is characterized by the voice of God. God is speaking more today than he has ever done in the past. These gifts release the voice of God! He wants to have fellowship with us, he wants to fill us with his Holy Spirit so we would prophecy, see visions, receive his dreams etc. God is a speaking God, he wants us to hear his voice and he instructs us to become vessels of his voice to encourage others. Basic conditions to hear the voice of God. Now that we know for sure that God still speaks today, the next question is: And, how can we be sure we are not deceived by a wrong voice, for example by a deceiving spirit? First of all I want to outline two very basic principles that help you hear the voice of God accurately. Only Jesus Christ is the way to God and without him you will never be able to hear the voice of God clearly. Jesus Christ came to set us free from the realm of witchcraft, deception and darkness and to bring us close to God. He made it clear that he is the only way to a relationship with the heavenly Father: I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. Without Jesus Christ we are exposed to spirits and spiritual powers that want to mislead us. But he came into this world to bring the true light, that sets us free. Deny once and for all every other spiritual source of influence, close the doors to every form of occult practice, sorcery, new age, witchcraft, fortunetelling etc. throw it as far from you as the east is from the west, repent from it with all your heart and bow deep before the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who died for you, to forgive your sins and give you a brand new life in him. Let your pride go down the drain, let your own opinions and every form of rebellion fall away and kneel before Jesus Christ. Surrender to him and ask him to become your one and only true Lord, God, King and Source. Here you can read more about Jesus Christ. Then sign up for free: The Bible says that everyone who believes in Jesus Christ, may receive the glorious, amazing gift of the Holy Spirit. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Without being baptized or filled with the Spirit of God, it is impossible to hear the voice of God clearly and regularly. He is the breath of God who comes to live inside of you, to enable you to have a supernatural relationship with God. Read how you can receive the Holy Spirit. Listen to the voice of God. God desires more than anything to talk to you, but he is waiting for you to learn to listen. There is only a relationship when there is communication. You have a friendship when you talk with each other and listen to each other. Learning to listen is the first step. Take time to be with God, without saying anything. Learn to relax with God. Learn to open your heart for Him. Learn to set time apart to come into quietness and rest with God. You can count on that. God is spirit too. That is why God speaks to you in a spiritual manner.

He speaks to your spirit. So you can hear him with the ears of your spirit. Ears of my spirit? Your spirit has senses just like your body. People who have had a near death experience, left their body for a short period of time and suddenly they could see, hear and feel much better. Your body has senses. But your spirit also has senses. When God speaks, you listen with the ears of your spirit and when God shows you something, you will see it with the eyes of your spirit. That is why the Bible says that only knowing God intimately makes you truly wise. That is why Jesus said: I have taught you for three years, but only if the holy Spirit will come into you, you will understand. He will lead you into truly knowing by experience the truth. It is given to you by the holy Spirit of God. That is an important difference. A well-known Christian song says: A bible verse says: I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling. As Westerners we have been taught to understand everything from our brains. If our grey cells cannot grasp it, we want to keep a safe distance. However, God is not a set of brain cells, nor is he a book full of words. How do you listen with the ears of your spirit? A deep impression in your heart. Soft, loving, something very clear, sometimes very quiet. You just hear it. Or you know something very strongly. Or you can feel a thought well up from the inward. It comes spontaneously, naturally, quietly. The voice of God is like a spring that spontaneously wells up. God is a father, a friend, a lover. He is also a loving Shepherd. He is soft, loving and constructive. Even when he corrects you, he will do it from his love and with the desire to bring you more in his love. How do the eyes of your spirit function? You can just SEE it in front of you. God shows it to you. With others it is less often. You can always ask God to open your eyes more and to teach you to see with the eyes of your spirit. When God shows you something in your spirit it usually makes a deep impression. I once saw an image of an awesome light. You are outside of that light. You are supposed to be in that light. The lesson God showed me with this was: Come and be at ease where you are supposed to live: You will never forget lessons like that.

Chapter 6 : Discerning God's Voice

To conclude, God's voice can be heard anywhere. Through the external living Word of God, through events, and through the people around you. Gone are the days we should wait for the prophets to deliver God's message to us.

But the healing Jesus offers is about more than just physical sight and physical hearing. Jesus restores sight and hearing to these particular people in the gospels to show us how he is able to heal our spiritual blindness and deafness. Sometimes it is the noise of our own scattered thoughts and preoccupations. Sometimes it is the noise of our worry and doubts. We need to be intentional about creating quiet times and spaces in our lives where we can turn down the volume not just on the world around us, but in our own minds, as well. When spirits communicate, they do so in non-physical ways. We perceive them directly in our minds and not necessarily as words. We may perceive these spiritual communications as images or impulses. Often they may be hard to distinguish from our own thoughts. This means that the thoughts in our mind are not always our own. God, or his angels, may be communicating with us. It may also be one of the fallen angels, for demonic spirits are a real force in the world, and they are actively trying to separate us from God. Have you ever had the experience of a thought popping into your head, seemingly from nowhere? Well, it may not have come from you. It may be a spirit, or God himself, communicating with you. We should note that for all intents and purposes, it makes no difference whether it is God or one of his angels communicating. You were not thinking of that person before, but their name or their face suddenly pops into your mind. Reach out to them and see how they are doing. Alternately, perhaps you are at prayer and an image comes into your mind of something sinful; an illicit temptation, or an evil thought. Again, you were not previously thinking of these things, but the image arises seemingly out of nowhere. This could be a demon attempting to distract you from prayer and draw you away from God. Do not entertain such thoughts. Discernment The fact that spiritual beings communicate with us requires us to be discerning. When certain thoughts or images come into our minds, how are we to know if they come from God and his angels, Satan and his devils, or from within our own psyche? The spiritual giants of the Church, such as St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, St. Catherine of Siena and others have written much about the discernment of spirits. God wants to build you up. Satan wants to tear you down. Be strong, fear not! They are the first words spoken by angels almost any time they appear. It is what Jesus tells St. Peter when he first calls him to leave his fishing boats and follow him. Do not be afraid. He wants you to think you are beyond help. He is the Father of Lies. These words are not true. I take delight in you. God can never love someone like you. I can heal you. Your Father is here. In the words of Isaiah, God comes with vindication. He comes with divine recompense. He comes to save you. He opens the eyes of the blind. He restores hearing to the deaf. He causes the lame to leap like a stag. He causes the tongue of the mute to sing. He causes streams to burst forth in the desert. Sometimes growth is difficult. But the discomfort caused by God will always be for the greater purpose of helping us to heal and grow, and become the saints he created us to be. It is like a doctor who has to break your arm in order to reset it so that it can heal properly, compared to a thug breaking your arm in a back alley. Both might cause pain, but one is to hurt while the other is to heal. One operates from hatred, the other from love. Because while God may at times cause pain and letting go of our sins can be painful, admitting our own weakness can be painful and God will never cause you harm. He works only to heal and restore. Ask God in prayer to open your ears to his Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you discern his voice. Invoke the intercession of your guardian angel and the saints. They can help you pray. And if you need further help, talk to your pastor, your confessor, or a spiritual director. Seek out those who can help you discern the voice of God in your life. And then have the courage to follow it!

Chapter 7 : Do you long to hear the voice of God?

The God who loved you enough to die for you loves you enough to talk to you. And wherever you are in your spiritual walk, God will find a way to speak to you in a way you will understand.

Our church sponsors a Boy Scout troop and many of my friends have sons who participate, so this Memorial Day weekend has taken on a new significance for me recently. On the Saturday before the holiday each year, my Facebook wall fills with pictures of families placing small American flags on the graves of soldiers throughout cemeteries in our county. They call this event Flags for Vets and even just from the pictures, I love it. I love how families are teaching their sons to value service, sacrifice, and bravery. At first it seems a little unselfish for busy families at the hectic end of the school year, who are likely buried under a calendar packed full of graduations and parties, to take a Saturday morning to honor those who have died. Maybe they missed out on other activities in order to participate. Is it really much different in our service of Christ? How easy it is to feel sometimes like the sacrifices we make for Him should merit something. We feel a little proud of ourselves perhaps when we reject sin or give up something we want so we can give to another or set aside a Saturday morning to serve our community and minister to the least of these. But Christ gave everything for us, His very life laid down in painful sacrifice so we could be free from the inevitability of hell and the prison of sin. It seems a fitting way to remember the responsibility we bear in order to honor the service of others. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. And yet, it happens. Of course, I would never abandon her. Her crying pauses as she listens closely to my call. When she sees me, her face lights up for a moment and then she falls into my arms, crying for just a few seconds more as if to tell me how frightening it was to lose sight of me. Sometimes in the everyday busyness and chaos of life, we can lose sight of God. 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. He knows you, His precious sheep, and He has called you by your name. God not only loves the whole world, He loves you. He not only died for everyone, He died for you. He not only has the whole world in His hands, He has your world in His hands. This takes effort on our part. It is a discipline to make time in our busy, fast-paced lives to focus on our Savior. It is well that we accept the hard truth now: The man who would know God must give time to Him! He must count no time wasted which is spent in the cultivation of His acquaintance. Our work schedule is too hectic to allow for significant time in prayer. Our kids are too loud for us to spend any time in meditation. Then, when we cannot see His face, we can still distinguish His voice and respond to His call. Most importantly, she is a Christ follower with a desire to help others apply the Bible to everyday life with all its mess, noise, and busyness. To read more devotionals by Heather King, [click here](#).

Chapter 8 : How to discern God's voice from all of the others ~ Simply Love

The Bible gives us multiple ways to discern God's voice from the enemy's but here are three biblical ways that God taught me through this specific story. 1. The Holy Spirit will never contradict the Bible.

Our lives can sometimes feel like constant noise—voices from every side—influencing the way we think and feel. But, in the midst of it all, there is one voice we need to hear the most—the voice of God. Do you need to hear Him today about your finances, your children, your marriage or your health? There is good news—God is speaking to you all the time. God has promised to lead His children by His Spirit and enable them to know His voice. That means you can learn to know exactly what the Spirit of God is saying to you about every situation. You can learn to hear God! When you do turn them on, you fully expect to hear something! So, how do you check your spiritual receiver? The one way to know if your spiritual receiver is turned on is to answer this question: Do you expect to hear from God? But, here is an important truth: So to hear Him, you have to tune in and listen carefully. What is an inward witness? He communicates from His Spirit to your spirit, and then your spirit communicates what you hear to your mind. That is what we call an inward witness. It is very similar to a thought or a prompting. Want to get notified the next time we upload videos like the one above? It applies to whomever seeks Him diligently, spends time fellowshiping with Him through prayer, and obeys the commands in His Word. A receiver who is intact and ready to tune in to the voice of God is one who is expecting to hear from Him, and is willing to learn to know His voice. You had to find the right frequency. You never questioned if it was broadcasting—you knew it was—but you had to do your part to find the frequency and tune in. How do you locate the frequency God uses to speak to you? Obedience in the simple things is very important to God—it reveals the willingness of your heart. He will talk to you about the small things in your life that you need to change—adjustments you need to make. God wants liberty and freedom for our lives, and that begins with training. He teaches us how to be led by the Spirit. Sometimes, the small things He asks of us may seem unimportant, or involve giving up things we think we enjoy. But to reach a level of intimacy with God where we hear His voice and are launched us into new places in the spirit, obedience must become a non-negotiable in our lives.

Chapter 9 : Discerning the Voice of God: How to Recognize When God Speaks by Priscilla Shirer

In fact, there are three voices that we can hear -- the voice of God, the voice of our own fleshly desires, and the voice of the Devil. But Jesus tells us in John 10 and 5, " and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice.

Here are some simple rules to help you discern His voice. Arriving at my hotel room in New York after ministering at a conference, I crawled into bed completely exhausted. But God had another idea. In the middle of the night, the Lord woke me out of a sound sleep and told me to go to the lobby. I hurriedly got dressed and went downstairs. The clerk working the night shift at the front desk was bored and delighted for someone to chat with. She did not yet know the Lord, and we had a great conversation as I shared the gospel with her. Get Spirit-filled content delivered right to your inbox! [Click here to subscribe to our newsletter.](#) I also shared some of the wonderful things the Lord had done on my recent trip to the United Kingdom and how He had spoken to me there about something very specific. Suddenly my new friend interjected: This young lady had just expressed the secret fear of many Christians: He has many wonderful and encouraging things to say to us. It seems as if one person after another comes up to me and says: He has created you with ears to hear His voice see John 10:10 And this is something you can learn to do. God wants to communicate with you even more than you want to hear Him. You can eliminate certain "words" because God simply would never say them. Knowing what the voice of God does not sound like will eliminate confusion and help you hear Him clearly. He would never say anything that would contradict what He has already said in the Bible. By studying Scripture, you will get to know how He thinks, and you will become familiar with what He has to say. Then it will be easier to hear Him clearly when He speaks directly to you. Go back to God and tell Him what you thought you heard; then ask Him to show you what He really has to say about that issue. Have you ever been in a situation in which you were extremely tired? Perhaps your friend was trying to talk to you, but you had a hard time concentrating and listening because you were so exhausted. When you are tired, it is much harder to follow a conversation. The same principle applies when we listen to God. God desires for us to walk in His rest and peace. But when we are anxious, unsettled or exhausted, it is harder to hear His voice. There have been many times in which I have cried out to the Lord for clarity on something, desperate to hear from Him right away. But instead of answering immediately, God put me to sleep. I woke up rested, and then I could hear His voice much more clearly. And that is when He would speak to me on the matter. I remember the time I was organizing an overseas ministry trip. I was trying to make all sorts of decisions, such as who should be on the team, how long we should go for and what travel arrangements should be made. Meanwhile, a close friend and I were in the midst of a serious disagreement. Each time I would try to pray for direction about the trip, I would start thinking about my friend and worrying about our relationship. I was in turmoil because of this, and it was affecting my ability to hear God. I telephoned a prophet friend and asked him to seek God for a directive word about the trip. The word he came back with surprised me. He said that I needed to sit down and find peace with God about the situation with my friend. After that, I would be able to hear God clearly for direction. I spent the rest of that evening praying, and I finally did receive peace about the relationship. That night I had a wonderful and restful sleep. The next morning I woke up with a clarity about every detail of the trip. Everything fell quickly into place. This happened because I dealt with the thing that was making me anxious and unable to hear God. Then I could hear Him clearly, and I got the direction I needed. God does not speak to us from a place of anxiety and unsettledness. Instead He helps us deal with the things that brought us to that state, and He has us rest and get our balance back. Then He speaks to us clearly. Sometimes people make it a lot harder to hear God than it should be. They think that God is going to talk to them in obscure riddles or other cryptic means. They assume He will be hard to understand and that it will be a test to see whether or not they can discern what He has to say on a particular matter. That is not what the Bible says. God speaks clearly to those who seek Him see James 1:5 He finally discovered a series of cryptic clues in some ancient language. They turned out to be a series of obscure riddles leading to the Grail. One of the riddles was, "Only the penitent shall pass. Only the penitent shall pass. A giant axe suddenly came swinging out from a wall. It would have chopped him in half if he had been standing, but it passed over his head. He had figured

out the riddle in just the nick of time. If it had taken him a second longer, he would have died. We think God is very mysterious and that it is some type of major, difficult test to figure out what He desires to communicate. This simply is not true. There is a test that comes with hearing God, but it is not about our ability to discern what He is saying. God is willing to communicate clearly to us. The test is in our willingness to obey God after we have heard Him clearly. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" John. God will communicate clearly with us if we will listen to what He tells us and obey Him. And His ability to communicate clearly is greater than our ability to "miss it" or "hear wrong. One day, about a week before Christmas, God told me to give a friend of mine some money because she did not have enough to buy Christmas presents for her family. He also gave me a word of encouragement for her. While it is true that God told me this woman was experiencing financial hardship, He only did so because He wanted me to be part of the solution. He was not gossiping. He would not have revealed information about her if He was not going to ask me to assist by giving to her in His name. The enemy is quick to try and condemn us. But the Bible says clearly: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" Rom. But conviction and condemnation are not the same thing. Condemnation is vague and abstract. Something is very wrong with you. It gives you the feeling that nothing can ever fix your problem. But conviction encourages us. It gives us solutions to our problems. Condemnation pushes us away from God. Conviction draws us to God. The goal of condemnation is to make us give up. The goal of conviction is to help us reach our maximum potential, to be all we can be in Christ. There are times when we need correcting, and God is faithful to correct us. The Bible says that God, like any loving father, corrects His children for their own good see Heb. But His correction is not punishment--it is helping us fix a problem so that we can be closer to Him. I remember when God really showed me that He does not condemn us and push us away. It was about a year ago. My husband, Ed, and I had a rather strong disagreement, which is rare for us. I felt sinful about what I had said to my husband. And I felt horrible about what he had said to me. Then it came time for my evening devotions.