

HOW TO HEAR FROM GOD

LaFAMCALL (END-TIME) MINISTRIES

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Why the Book was written

I wrote this booklet because of the many inquiries I have received from believers, some through letters and others through personal visits, all concerned about how to hear from God! I was surprised at the first time when some of the inquiries came from people I regarded as very mature Christians. Soon, I realized that this was one problem that actually cut across all cadres of believers, yet one problem that rarely received any attention in our various churches!

No wonder people find it easier to say, “My pastor said”, rather than “The Lord said”! And so, when the pastor slips off, every one also derails with him, because none can make independent inquiries directly from the Lord. That is very much like the Israelites in the wilderness who could only hear and quote Moses, but dared not interact with their God directly. In the process, they all perished for they knew not the ways of God! What a dangerous thing at this end time for any believer to depend entirely on the pastor!

It pained my heart the more when I realized that the Lord was actually speaking to many of these people, only that, like Samuel, they could not recognize his voice. All they needed therefore was someone to direct them, just as Eli did to Samuel. And the Eli's of our time appear to be too busy with some other issues.

If you are one of those who have been suffering in silence for so long on this issue of hearing from your Father in heaven, you should now rejoice for your need will soon be met, by the Lord himself, through this little treatise.

May the Lord Jesus graciously bless you as you read. Amen.

Lambert .E. Okafor
Lagos, Nigeria
March, 1996.

Second Edition;

We discovered that we omitted the most important point in the first edition, that is, steps we can take to actually begin to hear from God. We have now included these steps as the last chapter; that is “How to actually start hearing” as chapter 9. That is the main reason for this second edition. May God bless you as you now take steps to actually start hearing from him?

February 2005.

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Chapter one

Can we hear from God?

My sheep hear my voice... (John 10: 27)

Yes, we can hear from God, according to Scriptures and people's experiences. God spoke with Abraham, the father of our faith, on several occasions (for instance see Genesis 12). Those friendly discussions would not have taken place if Abraham did not hear from God. He obeyed some difficult instructions, (such as the request that he should sacrifice his son, Isaac) because he heard them clearly and directly from the Lord God himself.

Moses spoke with God, face to face, as the best of friends would (Exodus 33:11) and that enabled him to obey some rather difficult instructions such as leading the Jews out of Egypt. Many great men of God of old heard from God, including Isaac and Jacob. The prophets of old also heard from God, otherwise they could not have spoken for Him!

Under the new dispensation, the disciples of the Lord Jesus and the early believers, according to the Acts of the Apostles, heard from God, including some spectacular experiences like that of St. Paul on his way to Damascus when God's voice spoke quite audibly to him (Acts 26: 14).

THE NEED TO HEAR FROM GOD

Below are some of the reasons why we must make efforts to be hearing from God.

For deeper relationship

A child that cannot hear from his father would not be able to enjoy a good father/son relationship with him because he would not know his father well. There would be no adequate communication between him and his father.

God is our Father. We should be able to hear from him so as to know his mind concerning us – how he feels about us. This knowledge would then help us to draw closer to him, and so know him better! This in turn gradually leads us into discovering God more and more, thereby enjoying deeper relationship with him, which is the highest thing anyone can own on earth! And the chain continues.

Communication is necessary for any cordial relationship to exist. Also communication is a two-way process. A situation where we talk and talk (in prayer) to God without getting any feedback from him is not encouraging. We should both talk to, and be able to hear from God for any deep, personal relationship to occur and thrive.

For guidance

Another reason why we must hear from God is that of guidance. God, through the Holy Spirit, is our Teacher and Comforter. As a Father he needs to guide and direct us from time to time and these cannot take place unless we are able to hear him! This is more so when we realize that God's ways are quite different from our own ways. We therefore need to hear him all the time for necessary instructions, corrections, and reproofs and so on, otherwise we might go out of his ways.

Hearing God is so comforting that we all just have to get the experience. Thank God that every child of God is entitled to such experiences too! In the midst of difficulties, it can be quite soothing to hear his voice of authority speak concerning the situation and dispersing our adversaries. In time of depression and doubt, his sweet voice enlivens and reassures us! In sorrow his voice brings comfort and in distress and afflictions when nothing else can help, his voice says 'peace', 'be thou still!'

Every believer must therefore not rest until he or she begins to hear clearly the sweet voice of our Father Who art in Heaven, yet whose voice is heard here on earth by those who know him! If occult men hear the voice of the occult spirit and understand its ways, if witches and wizard hear the voice of the witchcraft spirit and keep it's laws, if satan the devil speaks to his followers whom he deceives, and they hear him and believe his lies, how much more should we desire to hear, and indeed begin to communicate freely with our God Who has shown us so much love and Who has better and trustworthy promises for us who are in him?

Chapter Two

Some obstacles to hearing from God

Be still and know that I am God...

There are some things that can hinder us from hearing God. Some of these can be so subtle that it would take the Holy Spirit to enable us pick them out. What I have mentioned below are not all! You should ask God to help you identify any other one that is working against you.

Lack of faith

Hearing God is indeed a thing of faith, especially when his voice passes through our hearts, in which case it may sound as if it is our hearts speaking. Those who are afraid of making mistakes, and so can't exercise radical faith, may therefore find it difficult to start hearing him! Some people don't want to act until they are absolutely sure! That may be good, but at times we really need to take risks. This is true of physical as well as spiritual matters.

Self-condemnation

At times we condemn ourselves in our hearts, by the way we think, thereby denying ourselves what rightly belongs to us. Some believe that even though God still speaks to his children, he would never speak to them. They tell themselves that they are not qualified yet to hear from God, as if we receive these things on merit! One can rarely go above his thought. This is true in physical as well as in spiritual matters. We should desire in order to receive. "*My sheep hear my voice... and they follow me*", the Lord has said (John 10:27). No sheep should exclude himself therefore!

Anxiety and restless mind

Surprisingly, God has a very soft voice; a "*still, small voice*" (1 Kings 19:12). As a result, the least noise can prevent one from hearing him. Thus he has requested us to, "be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). We must be still (that is *inward quietness*) to be able to hear that small voice. A heart that is crowded with

anxiety and other thoughts cannot hear God easily. At times we might not know that our hearts are anxious! However, if we ask the Holy Spirit, he would help us purge the strings of anxiety and make our heart quiet enough.

Excepting wind and fire

This is close to the earlier point raised. Many people expect God's voice to sound so loud and deafening. They expect a big bang, as the voice of many thunders! It happened to Elijah too. He too had expected God's voice to come through the great wind, fire, and earthquake (1 Kings 19:12) but as we've seen earlier, it came in the most unusual way – *a still small voice*! Today many are also unwittingly expecting this big bang; they thereby miss God's voice!

It is true that God at times speaks in thundering form; he however speaks most often through the gentle, small voice as we shall see later. Some believers who have been hearing this gentle voice don't believe it is God's, and so they are still waiting – for the big one!

God's voice often sounds like man's voice (that is man's thoughts) because God's voice often passes through our hearts.

As we shall see later, it is only on a few occasions that God speaks directly to our ears – without passing through our hearts, thereby producing the big bang we often expect.

Chapter Three

Various ways God speaks to us

...Speak, for thy servant heareth
(1 Samuel 3:10).

There could be other ways, but below are the most common ways God speaks to us;

- By audible voice
- By revelations (Visions, trances, dreams)
- By inward witnessing
- By prophecies /word of knowledge
- By the written word

The audible voice

This is the clearest (but rarest) way God speaks to us. God speaks to us through the audible voice when he speaks directly to, and we hear him clearly with, the ears. The feeling is like when a big man speaks to a servant in a very loud voice. It is much more than that though. It is something like a roaring sound. It sounds clear and rather frightening and leaves no room for doubt. Often when it happens, one keeps looking around minutes later, as if looking for the person that has just spoken. God's audible voice comes with a bang and it makes immediate impact on the hearer, be he a believer or not. It is this audible voice that many believers actually have in mind when they talk of hearing from God, yet not even a sizable number of believers will ever experience it! The reason is that God prefers using other methods to speak to us on daily basis, as we shall see later.

Who can receive?

God's audible voice can be received by any one, at any time, at God's discretion, without any hindrance, irrespective of the person's spiritual standing. God uses it in very rare occasions to arrest the attention of the hearer on the spot, and to cause him to obey without any delay or doubt. Believers and unbelievers alike can hear

God's audible voice when directed at them without any impediment whatsoever. God's audible voice can also be received even when we are not at rest. In other words, we don't need to 'be still' before we can hear this one. God's audible voice drowns any other sound in and around us when it occurs. Therefore it cannot be hindered by anything!

A good Bible example of hearing God's audible voice is that of Paul which occurred on his way to Damascus when the voice spoke through the huge light that had appeared to him (Acts 26:14). Only God's audible voice could have arrested him on the spot and cause him to obey every instruction that followed. Any other form of speaking would have allowed him room for doubt, since he had already made up his mind to go for the persecution at Damascus!

I believe Abraham and the believers of the Old Testament, including the prophets, heard God's audible voice (as opposed to the more gentle ways he now speaks to those of us in the New Testament since the Holy Ghost began to dwell in man!).

I heard God's audible voice in my room at Onitsha on the day of my divine encounter and visitation. I will never forget that Sunday morning, 28th of May 1989, when I heard God call my name;

“Lambert!”

And he called me again; “Young man!!”

He then began to say other things that later constituted my calling and commission, as explained in my testimony book, *“The glorious arrest of a family.”*

Why God does not use audible voice often

God uses audible voice in extremely important situations where there mustn't be any delay or hindrance. That was the case with Paul. God also uses this method when addressing unbelievers since they don't have the Holy Ghost and so cannot hear nor understand him if he uses the other ways.

The method (audible voice) though the most effective of all, is least used perhaps because of the fact that it makes people behave like robots. They obey without wasting time. It paralyses man's will and resistance and turns him into an obedient robot. But we know that by his nature God does not want people to come to him or to obey him by force. He rather wants us to come to him WILLINGLY. And so

God prefers speaking to us by other ways which allow us to exercise our wills freely, to obey or not to obey him.

How to receive

Unlike other ways that follow, in audible voice nothing lies in our hands in order to receive. That is, we don't have to make any efforts or observe any rules for it to come. Only God decides when to use audible voice and whenever he does, we must hear despite ourselves. I doubt if we can even receive it by asking. I have not tried to ask since my first experience! I still shiver each time I think about it!

However, if you want to hear God once and obey him instantly, and thereafter keep obeying him, if you want to hear God once and begin to fear him all your life, if you want his voice to jolt you into action, such that you will never look back again, then just hope (or do you ask?) to hear his thundering audible voice! It is one experience every person on earth, irrespective of their faith, should have! We need God's thundering voice to silence our many and often irrelevant arguments. May be one will come your way before you finish reading this book!

Chapter Four

By Revelation

“...I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord...”
(II Corinthians 12:1)

Another way God speaks to us is by revelations and visions. Unlike audible voice, revelation is indeed one of the most commonly used. It simply means 'hearing' God with the 'eye', the inner eye. It is like the audio-visual technique used in passing on information where we both hear and see at the same time.

Revelation is received when we are at rest and the consciousness subdued, such as when we are asleep. It could come in the form of dreams, visions, and trances. I don't mean the trances done by psychics through evil powers. I mean short seizure of consciousness which appears as a very brief sleep within which period a vision is passed on to us by God. It can happen while we are active. The activity is resumed as soon as the brief vision is over.

The Bible is full of examples of people who interacted with God through visions and dreams. These include Joseph's dreams, Jacob's visions, Peter's trance at Joppa, Paul's many deep revelations (2 Corinthians chapter 12) and of course, the greatest of them all – John in the Island of Patmos where the “Book of Revelation” was received as part of the Bible!

God has often led me through strange and deep visions too. It can be a wonderful experience to know that God is personally sending you secret information through heavenly audio-visuals method!

How to receive revelations

This can be received by asking, since it is a gift (Matthew 7:7-11). That is unlike the audible voice.

One can receive by laying on of hand by a minister of God. That is, the gift of revelations can be imparted (1 Timothy 4:14). We have to be careful, however, about who lays hands on us.

Obedience to one vision brings another (Acts 26: 19).

It may also come to us as God's will, even when we have not asked or made any effort to receive.

Interpretation is needed when we hear God through this way. Daniel and his Jewish brethren in Babylon had this gift, but Daniel was specifically said to have the gift of interpretation (understanding) of visions (Daniel 1:17). If you don't understand your dreams or visions, you may ask God to give you the wisdom for accurate interpretations. When we ask God for the gift of revelations, we should ask him for the gift of interpretation also, otherwise we might see ourselves running to people each time we have a vision for them to give us the meaning, and this could lead us into error.

Revelations remove doubts in that we 'see' and 'hear', and seeing is believing. Seeing aids our faith. For instance seeing heaven in a one-minute vision is much more powerful than hearing about it a million times! That was part of the reason why Paul was very powerful in his ministry; he learnt a lot of unspeakable things through deep revelations and visions, as we have already seen. We still need faith however to apply and act on revelations, especially some very difficult or deep ones!

Every vision must be confirmed by the Word of God (the Bible) to avoid the error of counterfeits which familiar spirits (from the devil) are capable of giving. White garment churches and other satanic outlets like them are full of visions and trances which are sent to them from the devils. Therefore we need to cross-check what we have received with the settled Word of God. That is, to test every spirit, as we have been enjoined (1 John 4:1). In doing so, any vision, dream, or whatsoever, that does not agree with the Bible is not from God and so should not be acted upon for God does not go against his already settled Word!

You can receive now

Paul prayed for his converts that they might receive this gift of revelation whereby they could begin to hear from God, and so know him better.

I also do not cease to pray for you, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation – in the knowledge of Him. (Ephesians 1: 15-17).

You may say this prayer by faith, so as to receive. You may also wish to say your own prayers. The important thing is to have the faith that God will hear and grant you the request.

Dear Lord Jesus,

Please give me the Spirit of revelation to enable me begin to hear from you even through visions and revelations. Also give me the wisdom to understand any revelations you would give me from today. Help me also to avoid all errors that the evil one may want to send to me. Thank you Lord for I believe you have heard me. I look forward to receiving revelations from you, from today. Amen.

Chapter Five

Inward witnessing (or inward voice)

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit... (Romans 8: 16)

We have now come to the real thing, Inward Witnessing! Why the real thing? Because this is actually what is meant by hearing God, in the real sense of it. Anyone who says he hears from God, but whose experience does not include inward witnessing, still hasn't got it.

This is the most common way God speaks to us as individuals, and it implies receiving God's voice through our own spirit! I call it 'stepping down' God's high-voltage voice to our own level so that it does not shock us, just the same way high-tension electric wires are stepped down before use in the homes. God's audible voice is like the high-tension wire. However, when passed through our spirit (instead of direct to our ears) it is like stepping it down for our safer consumption. By this, God's higher intelligence is passed through his Holy Spirit to our own spirit, which then brings the message down to our level of reasoning and understanding. *“For the Spirit of God bears witness with our own spirit...”* (Romans 8:16). That is why this method is often mistaken for our own hearts speaking to us, that is our own thoughts.

Of all the ways that God speaks to us, this appears to be the most misunderstood by us. Quite often when God speaks through inward witnessing, we tend to take it for our own thoughts. The voice of the enemy also comes to us in this similar manner and that compounds the misunderstanding. As a result of this confusion, some people have chosen to ignore whatever voice they hear from inside them and have been expecting God's voice to come distinctly from outside them, through the 'ears'.

That is not the best thing either, as God prefers speaking to us from within us. Rather than abandon every voice that sounds from within us, for fear of making a mistake, what we should do is to try to recognize God's own voice. This is where 'discerning' comes in. We are to discern God's voice as distinguished from man's and Satan's. The Lord really expects us to be able to distinguish these voices.

Thus referring to the voice of the enemy the Lord Jesus had said;

All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them.

We should however recognize the beautiful voice of our Lord and Master, and then follow (OBEY) Him.

...And the sheep hear His voice... He goeth before them, and the sheep followed Him for they know His voice... (John 10: 3-4)

Making it abundantly clear; He further said;

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me (John 10: 27)

Do you recognize the voice of Jesus? If not, don't let this chance slip by!

How to discern God's inward voice

Since God's voice can be misunderstood when it comes through our hearts, how can we confirm that a voice is actually his? Common-sense and scientific techniques surely cannot help us discern God's still small voice inside us! However, there is what I call the 'peace and joy' test. The Lord Jesus had said; ... "My peace I give unto you"! (John 14: 27). As a result, peace has always been present whenever and wherever God is. Conversely, the absence of peace has always meant the absence (or disapproval) of God too.

We can use this law to distinguish God's voice in our hearts. Whenever a voice is urging us to do something and we are not sure whose voice, we should try to find out whether or not that voice (instruction) is accompanied with inward peace also. If yes, then it is likely to be God speaking. The inward peace is placed there by the Holy Spirit through Whom God's voice witnesses to our hearts (Romans 8:16). Absence of this witness (confirmation) by the Holy Spirit means absence of inward peace!

For instance if after praying for God's guidance in marriage, a particular brother (sister) persistently comes to your heart, you may use the 'peace and joy' test to know whether the leading is of God. All you do is to 'listen' to your inside as the thought of the brother (sister) comes up. Is that thought accompanied with peace and joy? If you think of that person, is there peace inside your heart? Do you have

joy as you go about planning to get married to that person? If you are true to yourself and your heart has not been darkened by sentiment and emotions, you will surely get approval or disapproval through this test.

Whenever I have misunderstood God's inward witnessing and wanted to act on the contrary, the Holy Ghost always safe-guarded me by withdrawing God's peace and joy, leaving me restless until I re-check and then abandon the wrong decision! I call it Holy Ghost check. It works for me. It will work for you too – so long as you are sensitive to the Spirit.

Practice makes perfect

If practice makes perfect in hearing God, then it is most applicable to inward witnessing! At times it even works like trial and error, so to say! This is because, it has been shown that by constant and conscious efforts, backed up by faith of course, one begins to distinguish God's small, inward voice with relative ease and accuracy until perfection is almost achieved.

Before then however, there might have been some mistakes, say when one has acted on a wrong voice, or when one has ignored God's voice in error. We should not be afraid of those initial mistakes, provided they are made from a sincere heart that is ready to learn. God really does expect us to learn through initial, but not-too-harmful mistakes, like it happened to Samuel too. He ran three times to a wrong person (Eli) before learning that it was God's voice and not Eli's (1 Samuel chapter 3).

Samuel's story actually brings to fore the awful possibility of someone even being the Lord's servant and yet not able to hear from him. It is true of the Old Testament believers as it is now.

And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord... That the Lord called Samuel, and he answered, here am I... And he ran unto Eli... (1 Samuel 3: 1, 4-5).

Verse 7 then explain why the problem; “***Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord...***” it said. Yet he was ministering (serving) unto the Lord in *verse one*!

Are you like that right now? Then ask the Lord to reveal himself to you today so that your life may change for better!

Chapter Six

By Prophecy

...Desired spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophecy... (1 Corinthians 14:1)

God may speak to us through word of prophecy also. This can be done either to us directly through our own lips or through someone else. God may speak audibly to us through our lips, in which case one is prophesying to oneself, aloud! It may happen when one is praying alone or even in the midst of other people. However, it would take an experienced Christian to know that the message being given by him is for himself! God's Holy Spirit would however help us to understand at last.

The more common type of prophecy is the one given through another person to us. If this happens in a gathering of many people, it will again require the Holy Spirit witnessing to our hearts that the message is for us. However, for the safety of your soul, do not get into the habit of people prophesying to you or you prophesying to them all the time. Many people are in this habit which could easily lead to serious errors. As much as possible try to depend on hearing directly from God. Other people may then be used to confirm. Whatever happens, subject every prophecy to tests before applying because familiar spirits can also give false prophecies to people!

Confirming God's voice

To be on the safe side, it is always better to test any voice that says something to us to ascertain its source. This is important because even the enemy can imitate God's voice and signs. Below are some ways we can test the validity of the voice we have heard.

God's Word

The Bible remains the MOST AUTHENTIC and readily available means of confirmation. Any voice we hear that says something contrary to what is already written in the Bible is not of God. But one may argue that Satan also quotes the Bible. Even at that, when Satan quotes the Bible, he often presents it out of context or incompletely, such that any watchful Christian can pick the hole easily.

To use the Bible for confirmation, however, can only work out well where the Christian is well versed in the Word. A Christian who lacks knowledge of the Word will obviously find it difficult checking against it. Thus David had said that he hid God's Word in his heart obviously to act as a check (Psalm 119:11) and as a lamp (Psalm 119:105). Let us make efforts to store God's written Word in our hearts also to be able to detect and reject errors in time.

Revelations at times can be used to confirm God's voice. It could be revelations to you or to someone else concerning you. The '**peace and joy**' test, as earlier discussed, is also helpful. God will always know the best way to confirm His voice to you if you let him know you need his assistance.

Chapter Seven

Tit-bits on hearing from God

Are you really desiring to be hearing from God directly? Then, in addition to what you have read already, try to go through these ones diligently, checking at each point whether it affects you. Thereafter, apply any new things you have learnt and God will surely meet you at the point of your need.

Be still after prayers

After praying, some people often rush out on God just as He is about to say something concerning the prayer. Such people take prayers to be one-way thing. They don't expect God to reply to their prayers on the spot, and so they miss the mark! The right thing however is to remain at God's presence, quiet, after prayers, expecting him to speak. God wants to speak at once concerning the prayers we have said. Therefore it is not proper to leave God's presence in a hurry after we have finished talking to him. The secret is that if God knows you are waiting for him to speak, he will!

Fish for Fish

Don't fear whether the voice you are about to hear is God's or Satan's. Some people, because of the fear that they might hear a wrong voice end up not listening to anyone at all, even God's! If you have spoken to God, simply believe that it is God also (*and not Satan*) that will speak back to you! Also trust that even if the enemy attempts to counterfeit God's voice, that the Lord will help you detect and reject him. If God sees that you trust him completely to speak to you, He is wise enough and able also to give you what you have desired and to shield you from the serpent!

Jesus has already assured us saying;

My sheep hear my voice...and they follow ...And a stranger will they not follow... for they know not the voice of strangers (John 10: 5, 27)

Avoid Samuel's error

Samuel was in God's service as a young believer, with every zeal. However, when God called (spoke to) him, rather than answer God, Samuel went to man of God, Eli, who wasn't calling him! (1 Samuel 3:1-8).

He wasn't expecting God to speak directly to him. He preferred going to man of God instead of dealing directly with God! Today many believers prefer going to some 'big men' of God with 'great anointing' for counselling rather than going to God directly. The lesson is that it was only after Samuel had learnt to talk with God directly that God began to reveal great things to him and soon he became a great man of God himself (1 Samuel 3:19, 21). Don't be satisfied in your heart until you are able to talk with God directly. Let that desire be intensified in your heart. Then God will assist you to begin to hear from him.

The children of Israel perished in the wilderness because they did not make any efforts nor had they any desires to hear God on their own. They were contented with hearing from Moses only. It is dangerous to hang the salvation of our souls on any man, whatever his apparent position with the Lord. Let's go beyond men of God, please!

Always fine-tune

Hearing from God is like receiving programs from the radio house. Though programs may be beamed from the station, yet there may be interferences which could hinder clear reception by the radio set. To receive properly, the radio set has to be in good working condition, with good and powerful antenna in place.

Fine-tuning is then necessary to remove undue interferences.

In the same way, when we are waiting to receive from God, there could be interferences that may block the way. Sources of such spiritual interferences include our own thoughts which might begin to wander about. At times one's mind could wander to places like the office, market, kitchen or so, the moment one is about to breakthrough in prayers. If that happens, we are to speak to our minds and thoughts and command them to be still and to be subject to the Word of God (2 Corinthians 10:5).

The devil could also inject distractive substances into the mind, like arrows, which produce negative tendencies like guilt-feelings (for sins already confessed many times ago), fear, self-pity, doubt, anxiety. We are to clear these interferences at

once (rather than dwelling on and considering them) by commanding them to be still. We should then consciously try to focus on God for clear reception. Guilt-feeling is often very powerful in causing interferences to clear reception from God. We should use Hebrews 4:16 to overcome. That place says we should come to God when we are in NEED and not wait till we are 'good' enough.

Unconfessed sins should be confessed the moment they are brought to focus. Hidden anxiety causes interference too. Remember the Lord says we should be anxious for nothing! A relaxed mind is necessary for clear spiritual focus and reception.

Like a TV-set

We are like the TV set. To receive signals and clear programs, certain conditions should be met. First, the TV set should be in good condition. Then it should be hooked to the source of power (to the mains). The socket should be switched on then for 'power' to come into the TV set. The TV antenna should also be properly stretched out; the bigger the better.

The TV set here represents man in his natural state. To be hooked to the source of power is to be in the Holy Ghost, the source of our spiritual power. That is when we are born again and are filled with the Holy Spirit. We are then alive. To switch on the mains is to remain in and be led by the Spirit of God, while to switch off the mains is to quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19). Those who are born again but who live in disobedience to God are quenching the Spirit and would soon find it difficult hearing God!

In this illustration the TV antenna is like our faith, for faith helps us to receive divine signals. The bigger our faith, the more we receive. Don't wonder whether you too have got the spiritual antenna (faith) for you surely have, otherwise you wouldn't have been reading this book! However, what you need might be to stretch out that antenna as a folded antenna cannot receive well. Stretching out the antenna is to exercise one's faith. For emphasis, a folded antenna is faith that is not exercised and it hinders hearing from God!

Act it out

Faith is demonstrated by works. If you have heard God then act it out (put it to work). That will encourage God to make his voice clearer and louder next time – since he knows you will also put it to work. Repeated obedience gradually removes

every hindrance and you can now talk with God face to face, as the best of friends would!

God can say no

This is another vital point to note in your quest for a closer relationship with God. God can say no! Yes, let me remind you that, in trying to hearing from God, you should be prepared to hear him even when he says 'no'. This reminder is necessary because we have often, somehow unconsciously, behaved as if God never says no. We have often said that God has answered only when he says yes. When he says no we don't seem to hear and so we keep on asking!

Let's learn from the great man of God, Paul. Paul had a need in his life - he wanted a devilish affliction to go – and for three times he prayed God to remove it from him. God said 'no' as the answer and Paul did not pretend not to have heard the no. Consequently he stopped asking and rather adjusted his mind and attitude towards the problem. Let's hear him tell the story.

...there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me... For this thing I besought the Lord three times, that it might depart from me. And the Lord said unto me, (NO) my grace is sufficient for thee. (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

Paul's understanding of God changed for better from the above situation. Said he;

Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (Verse 9b)

Today, people run from one place to another all in their efforts to let one affliction or the other go from them. In the process many run into wrong hands where they are initiated into various satanic cults! It is not good for a believer to run about as one that has no present help! We should rather go to God with our problems and needs and be open enough to hear him say 'yes', 'wait', 'not yet', 'no', and so on. We should apply his answer however difficult it might seem. His grace will always see us through if He permits a difficult situation to further remain

Chapter Eight

Don't give up

..Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion... (Philippians 1:6)

Were you hearing from God before and all of a sudden (*or may be gradually*) you cannot hear from Him anymore? If yes, then this place is just for you. Whatever the case, don't ever give up your desire and effort to begin hearing again. It can be a real terrible situation. It is like one giving up his breath! It is as if one has been abandoned by the Lord!

While I was writing this book, I had an awful experience that taught me the importance of what we have been discussing. As I began writing this book, everything was alright and the message was flowing. Then, all of a sudden, the message got stuck just a little to the end. For days I could not write anything despite repeated efforts to continue. I never knew the Lord wanted me to experience the awful state of those who can no longer hear from him, so that I would really have the needed compassion to address them while concluding the book.

It happened that about the same time too I was to have crusades in three villages, all lasting nearly a month. Then something strange happened! I could no longer hear from the Lord myself! Every area the Lord used to speak to me dried and closed up and I found myself almost alone in the whole world! I would pray and pray and the Lord wouldn't speak! I sought revelations, audible voice, inward witnessing, visions and trances, yet everything went off and dry! I suddenly became like a dead person, one who has run out of breath! I panted and gasped for air, at times physically, as if I had no physical air actually!

I eventually saw myself at the crusades literally floating in emptiness, sustained only by faith born out of previous knowledge that he would neither leave me nor forsake me. And when the events got tough, I had to rely on my younger sister-in-law (who was with me at the crusades) for the Lord's direction. I remembered one night that things got so rough and uncertain that I called and literally mandated her to get us revelations! *"You just have to get a revelation from the Lord tonight,*

since he still speaks to you...” I said, and I meant it! You know, the Lord knows when we have reached the limit, and so he really gave her a message that night.

This situation lingered on for so long that I thought I had been cut off forever! I got so dried up and breathless that I began to grow real weak and my thoughts wandered from one extreme to another as to what has become of me. It was then that the words of prophet Jeremiah (in his lamentations) came to my remembrance. God indeed at times hides his face behind the clouds! It happened to Jeremiah and he cried out.

When I cry and shout He shuts out my prayer... thou hast covered thyself with a cloud that our prayers should not pass through (Lamentations 3:8, 44).

Yet he held on to faith and past experience and refused to give up.

This I recall to my mind, therefore I have HOPE. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassion fail not (Lamentations 3:21-22).

I also remembered the man Job, when he had come to the point where most people would have given up, yet he hung his hope on the previous knowledge that God would not abandon him just like that forever.

Oh that I know where I might find Him! That I might come even to His seat (Job 23:3).

He then bemoaned;

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him. On the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold him. He hideth himself... that I cannot see him. But He knoweth the way that I take. (Job 23:8-10).

O yes, confessions of a man of God who has suddenly lost contact with His God! “But he knoweth the way that I take”, is the final resignation of a man of faith. Not even the great prophet, Isaiah, was without similar experiences. He also confirmed that this God can be difficult to understand at times.

Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour (Isaiah 45:15)

David also concurred and put it rather more sharply.

Awake, why sleepest thou O' Lord! Arise, cast us not off forever. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction? ...arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake (Psalm 44:23-26).

These were men who knew God and who tried all in their strength to live righteous lives. This means that God does not always shut us off because of our sins (though that does happen at times). At times he hides his face from us when he is passing us through some trials and wants us to learn something new. Our Lord Jesus Himself once felt forsaken by God and he too had to cry out!

My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46)

If you used to hear from the Lord but now things have changed for bad, I must acknowledge it is a real painful experience. However, experience shows that the Lord does not shut us out forever, provided we are still willing and ready to be restored. Try to examine yourself if there be any unconfessed sin in your life. You may ask the Holy Spirit to help search you, for the heart of man is deceitful. Thereafter, keep trusting and hoping that by his mercies the day shall be bright again. You shouldn't let doubts eat you up. Once sins are confessed, believe that he has actually forgiven you for God is no man that he should lie (See 1 John 1:8-10).

Do not faint, for He will surely touch and restore you again, soon. Take heart!

Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord. (Psalm 27:14)

Back to my own story

I have told you how I had lost contact with the Lord for so long, and had depended on my sister-in-law for communication with the Lord! It was a frightening thing for I felt like a man with blocked nostrils! That was the situation.

Then, one sweet afternoon, it happened and the Lord restored me and got me hooked on to his direct line again! In fact when it happened I was in my office and I almost did not want to leave the office again, for fear that I might lose contact again. I eventually returned home just because of my wife! The next day I prayed the whole day and spoke with the Lord the whole day, just to make sure he was still there!

It was then I began to feel really sorry for Christians who have not been hearing from and speaking with the Lord, as a child would with the father! I really began to feel seriously burdened for those who for one reason or the other have been struggling but can't get hooked on to the Lord's direct line! It is like blocking one's nostrils while one struggles for air! It is like a spiritual asthma!

Indeed the Lord is our breath! We must strive and must not give up until we flow in conversation with him. That is the only time we are alive in Him. That is the time we have started breathing again.

May the sweet Father who restored my breathing to me on that beautiful afternoon in my office touch you now and cause you to begin to flow in sweet conversation with him even from this day on, in Jesus' mighty name, Amen.

Chapter Nine

How to actually start hearing from God

Dear Reader, we have seen that God speaks. We have seen the various ways through which he speaks. We have seen the obstacles that can hinder us from hearing his voice. We have seen the need for us to hear his voice for ourselves.

Now, we have come to the most important issue – how to actually start hearing his voice! So, do you really want to start hearing from God? Then take the following practical steps.

1. Choose a time when you would separate yourself to God's presence in your house (or office) everyday. It should be the same time each day. Choose any period that is alright for you. This period is now your Covenant time. It can be one hour, or more (or even less), but the longer the better.
2. At your Covenant time each day, go to God's presence and sit down before Him. Then begin to study discipleship books. That is, books that will help you get closer to Jesus. At the end of studying, meditate on what you have read. This period is not for long prayers. It is not prayer time. It is a time to just be quiet in his presence and “eat” spiritual food, at his table. As you do this faithfully each day, God will start speaking to you!
3. The reason for this covenant time is because God speaks only to those who make conscious efforts to be close to him. He speaks to those who are close to him. He speaks to those who spend time with him in his presence. God has no time to waste on those who don't have time for God's presence. By the way, for us to hear somebody, we should get close to that person. So it is with God too. Those who want to hear God should spend time with God, in his presence. He doesn't shout to people who stay far away from him.
4. If you keep your covenant time every day, God will begin to speak to you. In fact, He will likely start speaking to you right from the first day, but this will be in dreams and visions. Why? Because you have to be very close to him before you

can discern his voice. As a result, he usually starts speaking to us through dreams first. Job 33:14-16 explains why.

For God may speak in one way, or in another, yet man does not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon man, while slumbering on their beds, then He opens the ears of men and seals their instruction.

So you see, God would want to speak to us, but because we are not able to perceive it, he has to use dreams. Therefore God uses dreams to reach us first, until we are able to hear his voice clearly.

In these dreams he will show you the things that are hindering your spiritual growth. He will show you pollutions and negative things that are in your life. These are the things that are blocking the way between you and him. As you receive these dreams, all you should do is to pray and ask him to cleanse you and rectify those things. That is all. In this way God will begin to cleanse, purge, purify and sanctify your life – via revelations!

God will normally cleanse us first before we would begin to hear his gentle voice clearly and regularly. So, generally speaking, cleansing precedes hearing. The reason is that his voice is small, and so we need to be near enough to hear him and for us to come near enough, he has to cleanse us, for he would not draw dirty people too close to himself. So, if we allow him to cleanse us, he will then draw us close, and as he draws us close, we will begin to hear his voice clearly. That is how it works.

Do you want this? Do you want it that way? Do you want him to start cleansing your life? Then start keeping covenant time with him and the dreams will begin to come. Each dream we receive from him actually cleanses us and gets us closer to him, until we are close enough to start hearing and discerning his gentle voice clearly.

5. Gradually you will see yourself beginning to hear and discern God's gentle voice which comes from right inside your heart. Note that it will usually take some time from the day you started keeping covenant time before you begin to hear clearly. Hence, hearing God's gentle voice on a regular basis is a process. It is not a thing that just happens suddenly, once and for all. His voice has to be learnt and learning requires time. But like I said earlier, He would begin speaking to you through dreams – once you start keeping your Covenant time daily. Then as you

mature more in closeness and intimacy with him, His voice becomes clearer and more regular.

At that time he will begin to speak to you more with his voice and less in dreams. From there, you get into the glorious realm of walking and talking with your Father, God everyday! That is where we must get to, for us to become his real sheep, for, “My sheep hear my voice...” the Lord has said (John 10:27). Start keeping covenant time in his presence from today and you will soon get there.

May God bless you.

OTHER BOOKS THAT WILL HELP YOU

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. Introducing Holy Ghost School | - | LaFAMCALL Ministries |
| 2. Whose Image Are You? | - | LaFAMCALL Ministries |
| 3. I dared to call him Father | - | Bilquis Sheik |
| 4. Practice of God's presence | - | Brother Lawrence |
| 5. The Secret place | - | Dale Fife |
| 6. Let God guide you daily | - | Wesley L. Duewel |

BACK PAGE

ABOUT THE BOOK

Do you hear from God? Does God talk with you as friends would? If not, would you want to start hearing from Him? Then this book is just for you.

And so, should every Christian hear from God? How can I start hearing from God myself? What are the obstacles to hearing from God and how can they be removed? I used to communicate very clearly with God, but now I can no longer hear Him! What has gone wrong and how would I be restored? What are those spiritual interference that obstruct clear reception of Heavenly signal and how do I clear them?

This little book may be the beginning of the miracles you have been waiting for!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lambert Eze Okafor is God's minister for the End-Time, who was called by God in a rather strange manner after God's presence, had appeared before him for three days. Himself, his wife and all in his family became born again instantaneously and since then, God has appeared to and spoken with him regularly.