



LESSON 49 God's Voice speaks to me all through the day.

Sarah's Commentary:

Isn't it interesting how our unwillingness to hear God's Voice is the only thing that keeps us from hearing It? What makes us unwilling? We choose instead to listen to the ego and to value our own identity as individual, unique beings who want to make our own decisions and maintain control over this perceived life that we call our own. It is all about our resistance to losing our special identity and our individual selves. This is why we still listen to ourselves and clutter our minds with all kinds of random thoughts. We keep the noise in our minds as a way of keeping the Holy Spirit away. **"The memory of God comes to the quiet mind."** (T.23.I.1.1) (ACIM OE T.23.II.7)

Jesus says God speaks to us throughout the day, and our right minds are in constant communication with Him. (W.49.1.2) This is the part of the mind where truth abides. **"It is quite possible to listen to God's Voice all through the day without interrupting your regular activities in any way."** (W.49.1.1) We might wonder how this can be. To listen to God's Voice all through the day, we must want to hear Him. Jesus says we are in constant communication, whether we are aware of it or not. We are not aware because our conscious mind ". . . is constantly distracted, disorganized, highly uncertain," (W.49.1.4) and ". . . functions in the world and obeys the world's laws." (W.49.1.3)

Our minds are split between the part that is focused on the world and "obeys its laws" and the part that is sane (the right mind where the Holy Spirit resides) and is still in communication with Him. When we are in touch with God's Voice, we hear it constantly. But this can only happen when we turn away from the distractions of the ego.

The only real part of the mind is calm, always at rest, and wholly certain. It is where God's Voice abides. **"It is really the only part there is."** (W.49.2.2) But we seem to have another part, which is the wrong mind and is the domain of the ego that we listen to most of the time. This part of the mind is a ". . . wild illusion, frantic and distraught, but without reality of any kind." (W.49.2.3) Jesus asks us to **"Try today not to listen to it."** (W.49.2.4)

We don't have to try to make ourselves calm or certain because this won't work. All we must do is go to where the quiet resides in us all the time. **"Sink deep into the peace that waits for you beyond the frantic, riotous thoughts and sights and sounds of this insane world."** (W.49.4.4) Our meditation practice is to go beyond these raucous thoughts. Other Lessons would have us look at them and be willing to release them. Both practices are important to our mind training.

There is a section early on in the Text in Chapter 5, Section II, **"The Voice for God,"** (ACIM OE Section III) where he clearly says that while we can be unaware of the place in our minds where

God is, we cannot obliterate it. What happens with the experience of the holy instant is that we receive a reflection of this unbreakable connection we have with God. At the point of separation, when the wrong-minded thought system arose, ". . . **God placed in the mind the Call to joy. This call is so strong that the ego always dissolves at Its sound. That is why you must choose to hear one of two voices within you. One you made yourself, and that one is not of God. But the other is given you by God, Who asks you only to listen to it. The Holy Spirit is in you in a very literal sense. His is the Voice That calls you back to where you were before [the separation] and will be again.**" (T.5.II.3.2-8) (ACIM OE T.5.III.19)

Do you doubt you hear this Call? Do you doubt you hear the Voice of the Holy Spirit that is always speaking to you? You are reading this and studying the Course because you heard and responded to the Call. While we think that we don't hear Him, something in us does. The only reason we don't hear His Voice consistently is because our focus is on the raucous, frantic chattering of the part of our mind tuned in to the things of this world. In other words, we are listening to the voice of the ego. To hear the Holy Spirit more consistently, we need to go past our thoughts to the quiet within. We need to refocus and choose where we put our attention. It will take practice to "**Go past all the raucous shrieks and sick imaginings that cover your real thoughts. . .**," (W.49.4.3) to the quiet, calm place where God is. We are learning to bring peace to any situation, but at this point, it takes a lot of work and concentration. It requires a willingness to take the time in quiet reflection, contemplation and meditation each day.

Jesus tells us that learning to listen only to God's voice was his final Lesson. We all have work to do if we are to become like him. It requires that we choose against our wrong-minded thinking. Jesus says, "**It is possible even in this world to hear only that Voice and no other,**" (T.5.II.3.9) (ACIM OE T.5.IV.20) but "**It takes effort and great willingness to learn.**" (T.5.II.3.10) (ACIM OE T.5.IV.20) That is what Jesus modeled for us when he heard only the Voice of the Holy Spirit, which came when he released his final doubt thought.

It is reassuring to know that God's calm and loving Voice is always available to us. I am never alone no matter how angry, fearful, or out of control I may feel. He is always available to guide me. I just need the willingness to look at how I am blocking this Voice by choosing to listen to the ego. He will never impose on me. I am totally free not to listen, but what I can't do is destroy this Voice in me. I can't destroy the connection to my Source, which is a statement of the Atonement Principle that the separation never happened; but I can choose to remain unaware of its presence. Jesus respects my decision. He never coerces me or tries to exert any control. He only asks us to reflect on what we truly want.

Today, let us take the time to go past all our unsettling thoughts to that calm place in us that is always there. How do we know we are hearing God's Voice? Is it actually a voice? Yes, it can be, but it is more likely to be an experience of peace and stillness. It may show up as an image, or we might get an intuitive sense of something we feel guided to say or do. His Voice may come in several different ways. "**If I need a word to help me, He will give it to me. If I need a thought, that will He also give. And if I need but stillness and a tranquil, open mind, these are the gifts I will receive of Him. He is in charge by my request. And He will hear and answer me, because He speaks for God my Father and His holy Son.**" (W.361-365.1.1-5) He gives us guidance in all matters, including practical matters. His guidance in practical matters is described in the *Song of Prayer* as the echo of the real song, being sung to us by God. The real Song is the Song of His Love and gratitude for us, which we return in our deep love and connection for Him.

"If you cannot hear the Voice for God, it is because you do not choose to listen. That you *do* listen to the voice of your ego is demonstrated by your attitudes, your feelings and your behavior. Yet this is what you want. This is what you are fighting to keep, and what you are vigilant to save. Your mind is filled with schemes to save the face of your ego, and you do not seek the face of Christ." (T.4.IV.1.1-5) (ACIM OE T.4.V.56)

When you listen to the ego, ". . . **it is sure that you will see yourself as tiny, vulnerable and afraid. You will experience depression, a sense of worthlessness, and feelings of impermanence and unreality. You will believe that you are helpless prey to forces far beyond your own control, and far more powerful than you. And you will think the world you made directs your destiny.**" (T.21.V.2.3-6) (ACIM OE T.21.VI.50)

That is our choice. We listen to the raucous shrieks of the ego and respond to the perceived demands of our world; or we go within and connect with One Who knows our best interests, One Who knows the outcome that serves everyone equally, and One Who can bring us quiet certainty in the face of any perceived calamity. It hardly seems like a choice if we really believed this, yet our resistance is strong because of our investment in the world and our identity as a separate, unique, individual self.

Today, I felt a sudden prompt to go visit a friend. I had no plan to go today as I had other things on my agenda that I actually preferred to do. There was initial resistance to listening to the prompt, but it felt quite insistent. So away I went and it turned out she was going through a difficult time and needed my presence to be there with her. I was very grateful I listened to the prompt and thanked the Holy Spirit for directing me to where I needed to be. My own personal agenda fell away, and in the end, what I had thought was important and needed my attention was easily resolved. I truly do not know my own best interests.

Course-based meditation is what the Lessons now speak about starting in Lesson 41 and again in 44, 45, 47 and today's Lesson 49. These Lessons, taken together, point to how to meditate. They also describe how to approach the practice. We are to approach the sessions with the confidence that we can do this since it is the most natural thing in the world. We know the way will be revealed if we believe it is possible. If we join with God's Will, how can we not succeed? We approach the meditation time by recognizing we are attempting something very holy. We start by repeating the idea, making no effort to think about anything but instead turning inward, sinking past all our idle thoughts and entering very deeply into our own minds. We keep the mind clear of any thoughts that might divert our attention by letting these thoughts quietly pass by. Observe any passing thoughts without involvement or attachment, and slip quietly by them. No particular approach is advocated, only a sense of the importance of what we are doing and its inestimable value to ourselves.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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