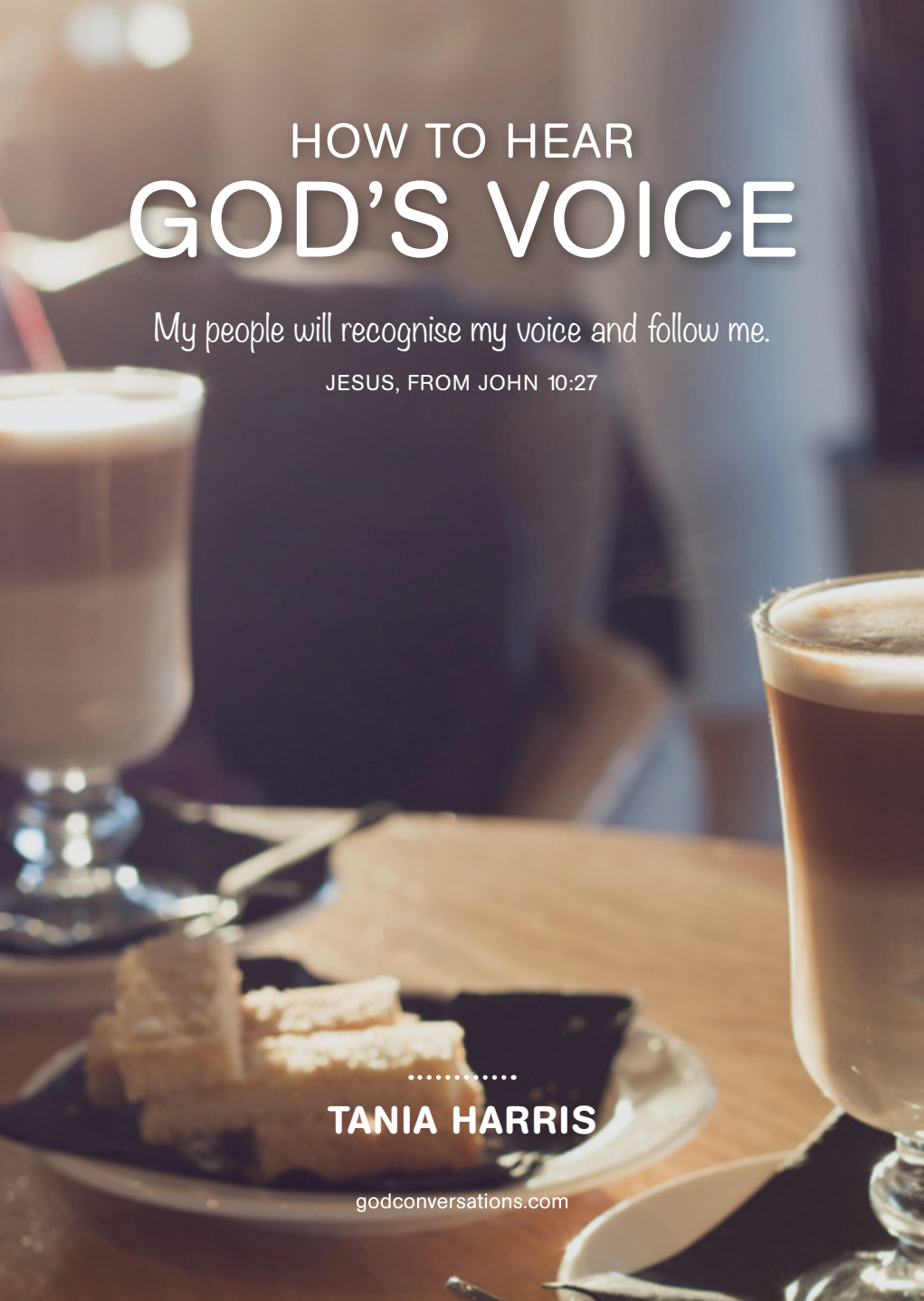




HOW TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE

My people will recognise my voice and follow me.

JESUS, FROM JOHN 10:27

.....
TANIA HARRIS

godconversations.com

Hi,

I'll never forget the first time I heard God's voice. That surreal experience of seeing the Creator of the Universe zone in on my personal world completely changed my life. Hearing God's voice is one of the best ways to know the tangible presence of an almighty God in the midst of your everyday life. It's what makes the relationship real.

That's why I'm so excited to welcome you on the journey of learning to hear God's voice more clearly in your life. I know the profound difference it can make and am committed to helping you along the way.

God's heart is to reveal himself to all those who seek him. In this short booklet are four steps that will help you experience God's voice for yourself. My prayer is that you will recognise his voice more clearly each day and in doing so, you will find the courage to follow it,

Tania



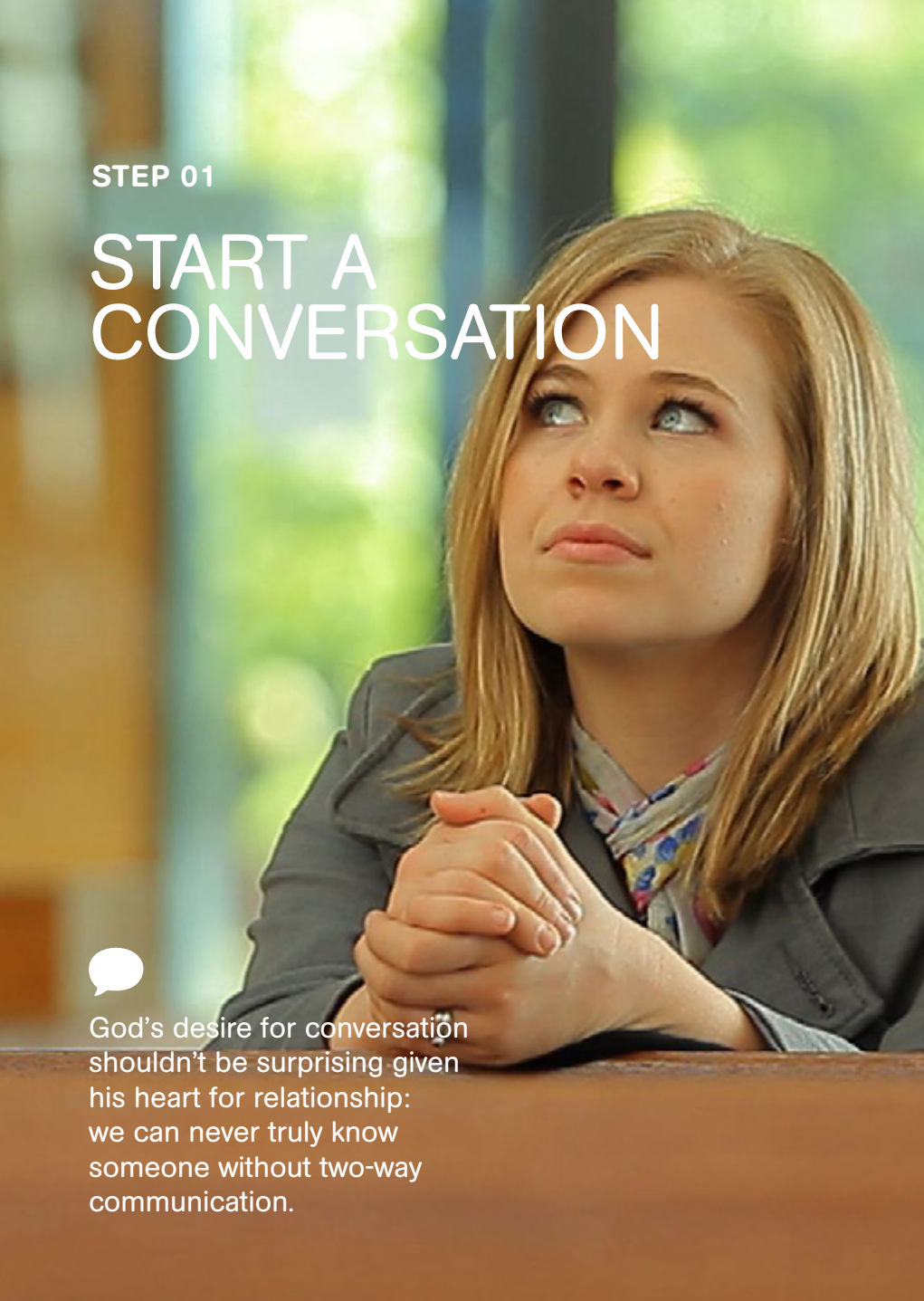
FOUR STEPS

01 START A CONVERSATION

02 HEAR THE SOUND

03 RECOGNISE THE VOICE

04 RESPOND IN FAITH



STEP 01

START A CONVERSATION



God's desire for conversation shouldn't be surprising given his heart for relationship: we can never truly know someone without two-way communication.

I've heard it said that when we talk to God, we're praying, but when he talks to us, we're crazy. Personally, I think it's far crazier for us to pray without expecting God to speak back.

Hearing God's voice starts with an expectation that he can and will speak to us. The Scriptures reveal that God has always been a talker. From Genesis to Revelation, we see him speaking to people about all manner of topics from their personal fears and concerns to the rise and fall of nations. This desire for conversation shouldn't be surprising given God's heart for genuine relationship. We can never truly know someone without two-way communication.

At first God's messages were given via the Old Testament prophets. Even when sin acted as a barrier between God and his people, the Creator God would speak to these men and women and they would pass his messages onto the people. The prophets were specially chosen and appointed for the job: when you needed to hear God's voice, they were your first port of call.

Then in the 1st Century, everything changed. God spoke through his son Jesus, who was sent to earth to personally deliver the message. While the prophets spoke the words of God, Jesus came as The Word of God. That means God's communication was expressed not only in the words Jesus spoke, but in the actions he performed - his message of love as he welcomed the outcast, his works of power as he healed the leper and his promises of provision as he fed the hungry. Ultimately God's message was expressed through Jesus' death and resurrection as he dealt with the problem of sin and opened the way for us all to have direct and unbroken communion with him.

After Jesus left the earth, God spoke through his Holy Spirit. The word of God was no longer limited to those who shared Jesus' table and walked the streets of Jerusalem, but would now be available to everyone in the world, wherever they went. In the same way that God spoke through the Old Testament prophets, all God's people; young and old, male and female would be able to hear God's voice for themselves. That means, his voice is now accessible to you and I.

Want to hear God's voice? It starts with the understanding that there is a God who loves you and wants to reveal himself to you. All you need to do is introduce yourself. Ask him a question. Start the conversation.

READ

Numbers 11:24, Psalm 115:4-7, Jeremiah 1:9,
Hebrews 1:1-2, John 1:1,14, John 16:12-15, Acts 2:16,17.

STEP 02

HEAR THE SOUND



God's voice is the Spirit of Jesus. It's a spiritual voice that we learn to recognise as we get to know the kinds of things God says and the kind of person God is.



What does God's voice sound like? Does it come as a loud booming voice or a quiet mystical whisper? Does he speak like a wizened grandfather or an animated comic? Does God have an accent?

We would all love to sit down and have a coffee with Jesus. But Jesus himself said hearing his Spirit would be better than a personal audience with him. God's voice is the Spirit of Jesus. It's a spiritual voice that we learn to recognise as we get to know the kinds of things God says and the kind of person God is. Hearing it is not a skill for those who've been a Christian the longest or a formula for those who have studied the Bible the most. It is not something reserved only for pastors, theologians and spiritual leaders. Jesus said that all those who seek him would find him. Those who have 'ears' would hear. It's all about the posture of our hearts.

That means we need to set our hearts to listen and alert our spiritual senses to hear. It means asking God to speak and listening for him to answer. So when I wake up in the morning; God what do you have to say to me? When I go to church on Sunday; please speak to me. As I drive to work during the week; Lord what is on your heart today?

Like any good communicator, God speaks in multiple ways. Often people hear from God in ways that are related to their personality - he tailors his message to how we best receive it. God can use anything to speak - his messages are creative and can be delivered using any of our senses:

1. Words We Hear

God uses words to speak. While we would all love to hear an audible voice, hearing God's voice in this way is rare and even those who have experienced it say it would not be heard by those around them. Mostly it seems the Spirit speaks to us inaudibly with messages that sound like our own thoughts - a 'still small voice'.

2. Pictures We See

It is said that a picture tells a thousand words. Perhaps this is why God communicates like this so often in the Scriptures. God's words come visually in dreams when we are sleeping or in visions when we are awake. Sometimes the picture speaks symbolically and needs interpretation - so newness is a baby, freedom is an eagle and anger is a dagger - and at other times, the scene is more literal.

3. Emotions We Feel

God's messages can come packaged in our emotions. The presence of love, peace, joy, freedom or conviction may invade our senses, setting us free, impressing us to do good and surrounding us with love and comfort. On the other hand, feelings of guilt, shame, fear or condemnation are never a part of God's communiques.

Sometimes God uses other people who know him to deliver a message as 'prophecy'. The beauty of this gift is that it can act as confirmation for what we have already heard from God.

Whatever method God chooses to speak to us, he is a masterful communicator who is able to communicate clearly. We need to trust more in his ability to speak than our ability to hear - the sounds of God are recognisable when we are listening.

READ

Jeremiah 29:13, 1 Samuel 3:10, Psalm 19:1-2, 1 Kings 19:12, Numbers 12:6, Acts 2:16,17.



STEP 03

RECOGNISE THE VOICE



The one thing we need to know before we can get it right hearing God's voice is to know that we can get it wrong.

By far the trickiest part of having a God-conversation is learning to recognise his voice among the others that we hear. I say 'learning', because this is not a cut and dried process. Like any relationship, understanding and discerning God's messages takes time and becomes easier as we get to know him more.

What makes it difficult is that while God's revelation is pure, we are not. Like water flowing through a rusty pipe, our experiences, mindsets and desires, all act to contaminate what we hear. We end up seeing what we want to see and hearing what we've heard before. Indeed the first thing we need to know before we can get it right is to admit that we can get it wrong.

The good news is that Jesus said his people would know his voice and having recognised it, they would be able to follow. God wants to be heard, even more than we want to hear. His intention is that we heed his voice and therefore we need to be know it's him.

To help us get it right, God has provided us with a number of safeguards or tests to use. Every word we hear, vision we see or feeling we have needs to be tested. There are three ways we can do this:

1. Jesus

The most important question to ask of any revelation is: Would God say this? Does it align with God's character and nature? Of course the best way of knowing this is to look at the life of Jesus recorded in the Scriptures, since Jesus is the perfect image and complete personification of the invisible God. Anything the Spirit says to me today will be consistent with what he has already said in Jesus. So the question becomes, would Jesus say this? Does it produce the fruit of his Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience and kindness? Does it produce the outcomes of everything Jesus did to strengthen, encourage and comfort?

2. Community

One of the greatest blessings of our time under the 'New Covenant' is that the Holy Spirit has come to more than one person. When we're unclear on what we're hearing, God can speak through another person. The Holy Spirit within others resonates with the word of the Lord in us, providing confirmation.

God did this with the early church when he wanted to show his heart for the Gentiles. God spoke the same message of acceptance to both Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10). That's why it's so important to spend time in our church communities. God will always confirm his word with more than one person. There's safety in numbers!

3. Signs

God will often provide signs to reassure us - these are supernatural, tangible indicators that the message is from him. When he was on earth, Jesus often did actions with 'signs following'. So when he wanted to show that he was 'bread of life' sent from God, he multiplied five loaves of bread and fed over five thousand people with them. This is what signs do. It's very different to sitting at a red traffic light and saying; "God if this is you, let the light go green in the next five seconds!" There's an element of the supernatural in it. It's like a visual display of what God has just said.

Yes, it is possible to get it wrong when it comes to hearing God's voice. But God has provided us with tests to help us get it right. God's nature is the same, yesterday and forever, so his message will always be consistent with who he is and what he has already said.

READ

John 10:27, 1 Corinthians 13:12, 1 John 4:1, Acts 10.
Hebrews 1:1-2, 1 Corinthians 14:3, Acts 10, Acts 15:28,
John 6:26, Hebrews 13:8.

STEP 04

RESPOND IN FAITH



Hearing God's voice is easy
when you're willing to do
what he says.

When I was first learning to hear God's voice, I made a radical promise; "God, if you will speak to me clearly, I will do whatever you say." It was said with a significant degree of trepidation; What if he said something I didn't want to hear, or asked me to go somewhere I didn't want to go?

I soon learned that having a God-conversation was not just about getting an answer to one of my questions. While God wants to help us in the everyday stuff of life, his heart is to build relationship. Everything he says has the goal of drawing us closer to him. He speaks to make us more like him, to help us fulfil our purpose on the earth and to bring his kingdom of love, joy and peace to everyone around us.

That means there's little point in hearing God's voice if we are unwilling to respond to it. A relationship can only go so far if one party is committed. Jesus said we show our love to him by doing what he says and in that context, he is able to reveal more of himself. It's the way intimacy works.

Sometimes it's hard to do what God says. He may convict us of a problem, call us to do something we fear or ask us to show forgiveness to someone we resent. But God's words are spirit and they are life. They have the power to create, build and set free. They are like bread to our spirits and honey to our souls. Jesus said we cannot live without them.

So whenever God speaks, it will only ever be for our good. We will know more of his love and we will see more of his power. Following his words may be challenging at times, but it will always be worth it.

READ

John 14:21, John 6:63, Matthew 4:4.

More resources

Check your inbox to see more resources that will equip you to recognise and respond to the voice of God!

Visit godconversations.com

We would love to hear from you!

Leave your thoughts, comments and God-stories at the links below.





“My people recognise my voice,
I know them and they follow me.”
Jesus, from John 10:27

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