



Week One: Abducted

Listening for God to speak audibly to us or to constantly look for signs from God leads to subjective and inherently unreliable communication. As we grow in faith, God reveals a better path to communicate with us. When you begin to understand that channel of communication, your relationship with God moves to much more solid ground.

Discussion Questions

- 1) If you could arrange any way for God to speak to you, how would you like him to communicate with you? What mode would you prefer? What would you like to talk about?
- 2) Have you ever sensed God speaking to you? How and when did this happen? What was it like? What made you believe it was God?
- 3) To what extent have you looked for 'signs' from God to determine his will for your life? If you've done this, share your experience with the group.
- 4) Have you ever been confused about whether a prompting you felt, "voice" you heard, or sign you were seeking was actually from God or not? What makes these kinds of signs difficult or easy to interpret?
- 5) Read *2 Corinthians 12:1-10*. Although some translations make use of the third person voice in *verses 1-4*, almost all commentators agree that Paul is talking about himself. Many also think that *verses 1-4* describe an experience Paul had during his conversion to Christianity described in *Acts 9*. If you had an experience like the one Paul describes, how do you think that would impact your faith?
- 6) After having an encounter like the one Paul describes, would you desire more of that kind of "dialogue" with God? If those experiences didn't happen again, what do you think that might do to your faith or confidence in God?
- 7) How much time does the passage say has passed between the actual experience Paul is talking about in *verses 1-4* and the time he wrote this letter (*2 Corinthians*)? What might that tell us about how frequently Paul had experiences like the one described in *verses 1-4*?
- 8) In *verses 7-10*, Paul relays a struggle that sounds far more current. What is the nature of Paul's struggle, and this time, how does God appear to be answering Paul this time around?
- 9) As you compare and contrast the two experiences of God Paul has had, does it surprise you that Paul got the less "dramatic" and more "disappointing" experience of God when he was more mature in his faith? After all, Paul when he wrote this had been a follower of Jesus for over a decade and had done more than just about anyone else to advance the Christian church. Would you have expected God to speak more ecstatically and favourably to Paul as his relationship with God grew? Why do you think God answered Paul the way he did?
- 10) Read *2 Timothy 3:14-17*. Here, Paul (the same Paul) is writing to Timothy - a younger preacher that he's mentoring. What's Paul's main point? What is Paul trying to make sure Timothy understands?
- 11) *Verses 16-17* make very specific promises about what the Word of God can accomplish in people's lives. What are those promises? What claims do they make? Do they ring true to you? Why or why not?
- 12) Does the passage from Timothy help you understand how a person might learn to understand God's will? What role do you think reading and applying the scripture play in being able to understand the will of God?
- 13) Do you think God might speak to people today (and to you) primarily through the Bible? How does that possibility strike you - as a relief, as disappointing? Why would you feel this way?
- 14) If you had a choice between a communication mode with God that is objective and reliable or subjective and open to much interpretation, which mode would you pick?
- 15) What changes in your life would you make in order to understand the Bible better in light of the probability that the Bible actually is God's primary communication channel with his people?

Taking It Home

This week, review your personal bible reading habits. How often do you expose yourself to God's word? How well do

you think you know it? How might you read the Bible more often and understand it more fully? If you are a regular Bible reader, how might you begin to read differently to see how God's word might answer the questions you're struggling with in your life?

Changing Your Mind

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17