

If God Spoke, Would You Hear Him?

For any follower of Christ who wants to grow and deepen his or her relationship with Him, time alone with God is critical. God communes with us through prayer, and He speaks to us through His Word. But just because we're going through the motions of Scripture reading and prayer doesn't necessarily mean we're growing.

If God spoke, would you hear Him?

So many of us go through the routine of a quiet time with God, but it's not truly a quiet time. We're surrounded by noise. Granted, we can't mute all noises—street noises, someone in another room—but there are other noises we can control.

Find a quiet place. Turn off the TV. Don't just mute the sound; turn it off. Ban social media from your presence. Turn off any music. Strive for silence. Make it truly a quiet time.

That's hard because we don't like silence. Our lives are full of sound, and we're comfortable with the constant noise. But silence? Oooo ...



Hands down, the world's quietest room is housed at Orfield Laboratories in Minneapolis. It's called the anechoic chamber (anechoic means "no echo"). It is so quiet that noise is actually measured in negative decibels: -9.4 dBA. Because all sound is absorbed, a person

can hear his heartbeat and the flow of blood in his body. *Woosh. Woosh.*

The world's quietest room is a disorienting place, and people can't take the experience for long. The longest has been 45 minutes.

You don't need to build an anechoic chamber (unless you're looking for someplace to house in-laws who tend to stay too long), but you can do away with distracting noises and images.

If anyone had an inroad to hearing God speak, it was the prophet Elijah. When he was told to "Go out and stand on the mountain in the Lord's presence" (1 Kings 19:11), he did—but his encounter with God was perhaps not

what he expected. God came in a great wind, fire, and an earthquake. It was when God came to him in a soft whisper that Elijah knew God was right there.

It's hard to hear from God when His still small voice is competing with the TV, a smartphone pinging every minute with another text or Facebook notification, or even ambient music. Strive for quiet so that you can hear God's still small voice.

We must learn to be in tune with His voice, to hear what He wants to say to us through His Word.



The residents of Green Bank, West Virginia do not use cellphones. They have no wi-fi. It's not that they're so backwards they're ignorant of modern conveniences and technology. Quite the

opposite. Green Bank is the home of the Green Bank Observatory, a collection of radio telescopes. These radio telescopes are super-sensitive, designed to listen for static and transmissions from remote galaxies. But for these superhuman ears to pick up these sounds, anything that puts off an electromagnetic signal has to be banned. So they've nixed microwaves. Even an electric toothbrush is a no-no.

To hear what they hope to hear, the scientists at the observatory have to forcibly remove any and all sounds that might interfere. [New York Times]

To hear from God, to be attuned to what He wants to say through His Word, remove those things that might interfere: sights, sounds, whatever. Find that solitary place where you can be alone with God.

- "Be silent before the Lord and wait expectantly for him" (Ps. 37:7).
- "It is good to wait quietly for salvation from the Lord" (Lam. 3:26).

Jesus followed these truths. We should too.

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and made his way to a deserted place; and there he was praying" (Mark 1:35).