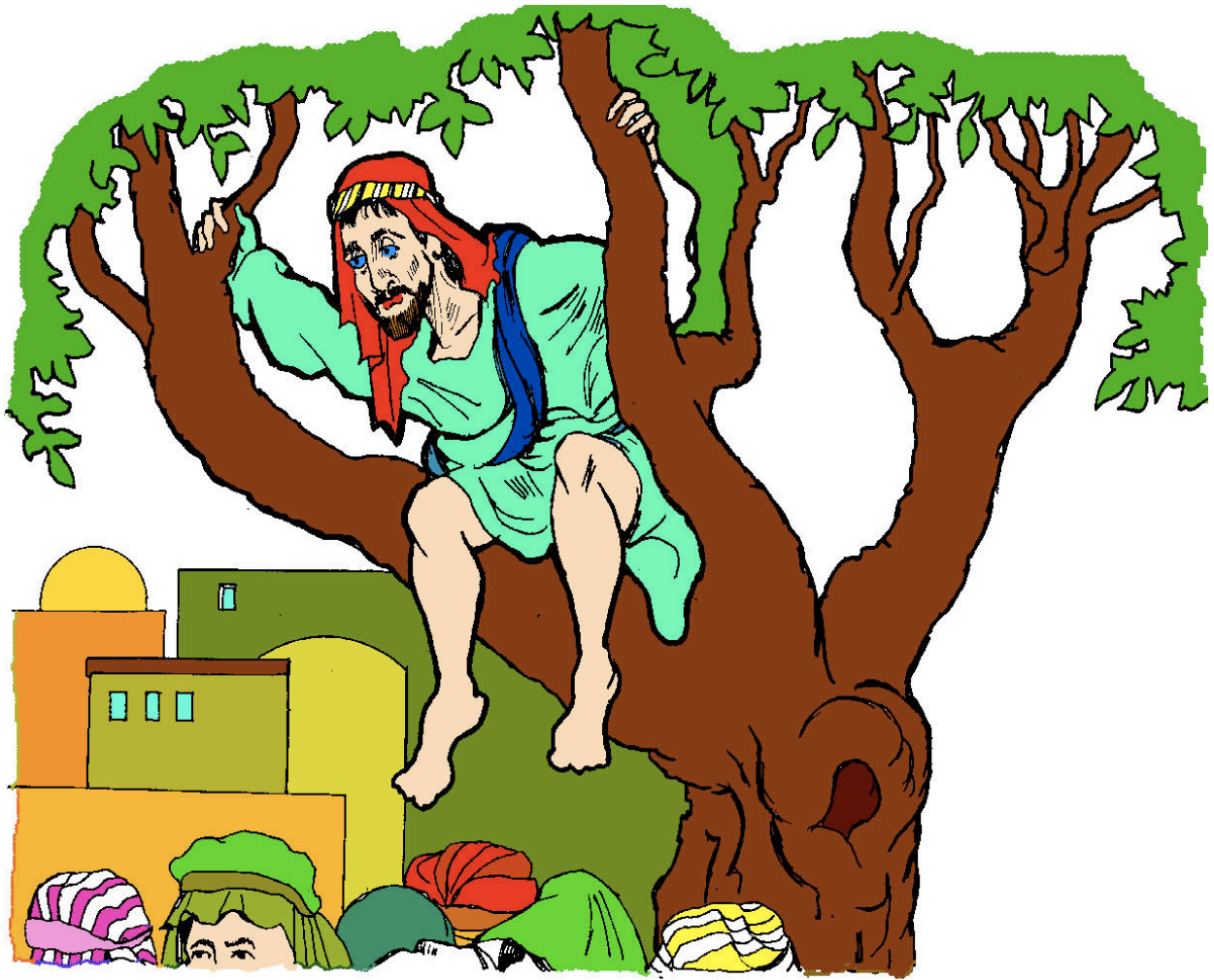


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How To Hear From God

**adapted by Pastor Mark S. Disbrow from Enter His Presence by Paul Chappell*



A Study Prepared For Those On The Journey Of Discipleship

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How Can I Know If I'm Hearing From God?

As Christians grow in their walk with God the question often arises, "How do I know if I'm hearing from God?" This is an excellent question! An exciting one! Hallelujah, the desire to hear from God has surfaced. It is the beginning of a vibrant relationship with our Creator and Father.

Many people will say they've heard from God but not be able to explain how. Others will say they've heard from God but their statement is in contradiction to the Word of God. So, how do we hear from God?

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** Students and teacher should read every scripture referenced in this study. The comments before/after the scripture are a reflection expounding on the scripture and not the scripture itself.*

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Approaching God With Faith

The Definition of Faith: Hebrews 11:1-6

Points: Substance, Evidence.

Read: 1 John 5:14-15. The responsibility of the Christian is to find the will of God and to search the Scriptures about a matter and then claim God's promises according to the Word of God. Faith is not a "force" and God is not our personal genie. Faith is the evidence of those things already seen in the heart of God, or already present in the heart of God.

The Dynamics of Faith

1. Faith Pleases God. Unbelief is a moral problem. It is a moral choice. When a person has a heart of unbelief, it is an evil thing in His sight.
2. Faith Will Produce Victory in Your Life. Only God can move mountains and only prayer can move God. Read, 1 John 5:4. Read Jeremiah 29:13. Ask, are you searching with all of your heart? Prayer is the cornerstone to this.
3. Faith is Rewarded by God. If we are truly to enter into the presence of God, we must first believe that He cares, believe that He listens, and believe that He wants to answer our prayers. Ask, do you?

Illustration: The Praying Church That Didn't Believe.

Read Acts 12:1-19. At first, the church didn't believe that their prayers were answered.

Faith is casting ourselves upon God and believing that He can work on our behalf. Where are the Christians who will believe that in these last days, God can do something great once again? Where are the Christians who will diligently come to the throne of God's heavenly grace and ask Him for His help, instead of standing around discussing what can't be done?!

You see, God rewards faith, because faith honors Him. Faith does not lift us up. Faith humbles us as we confess that we can't make it alone. Faith is the act of casting ourselves helplessly upon God and believing that He can work on our behalf.

Memory Saying: "God honors faith, because faith honors Him."

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The Display of Faith

Learning to Live a Life of Faith: It is one thing to see and understand the workings of a new tractor, to know its specifications and to understand its power. It's another thing to climb up into the driver's seat and actually drive that tractor.

Likewise, that's how a lot of Christians are. They hear all about God, but they never see what God can do in their lives; they never let God get into the driver's seat and have complete control of their lives.

How?

1. Confess all know sin: Before I can come to God and ask Him for anything, I must be open and honest about myself. If there's something in my life that's not pleasing to him, I need to lay it aside. How hypocritical to have known sin in my life, known wrong, and yet come to God asking Him to do something. I must openly say, "God, I lay sin aside for You. I know it's wrong."

God's Word says whatever keeps you from going forward in faith should be put off so that you can run lighter in the race.

2. Run Your Own Race: Hebrews 12:1.

Illustration: In the 1800's George Mueller established several large orphanages in England. He started them completely by faith. He never wrote a letter asking for money, for staff, or for supplies. He simply prayed. He would often open his Bible, claim a promise from God's Word, and then pray that God would provide. Miraculously, God provided 7.2 million dollars for orphanages in England as a result of the many years of George Mueller's faithful praying. God provided through prayer.

Ask: What are you praying for?

Challenge: What can you believe God for?

3. ENTER EACH NEW DAY BY ENTERING INTO HIS PRESENCE

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Approaching God Biblically

Approach God in Personal Bible Study

1. Where We Must All Start: Colossians 3:16, Romans 5:8-9, Acts 4:12. When we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, a natural desire is born within our hearts to worship God. We are known by our fruit.
2. The Beginning Place For Worship: The Bible. We really don't know how to praise, give thanks, or approach God until we first look into His Word. As we come to the Word of God and as we learn of Him, then we can in truth approach Him and respond to what we know about Him. Read 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21, Hebrews 4:12, John 5:39, 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

The way to know God is through the Word of God. (An elementary step.)

3. God's Love Letter To Me: If we can remember a time we received a letter from a loved one and how many times we read it.... This is exactly the approach we need to take with the Bible. God's Word should be sweet to us. We should study it closely to make sure everything is right between us and God. As we approach God's Word, our prayer should be, "God, I want to know more about You and more about Your love for me. I want to know what You have for me today."

Approach God Through Bible Preaching

1. Biblical Preaching Reveals God: Preaching is a vital part of entering into God's presence. Non-biblical or extra-biblical preaching causes people to walk away knowing nothing more about God than they did before. Two ends of the extreme is straight "traditional formalism" and the other end is "emotional manipulation".

We need a sincere proclamation of Biblical truth that leads us into a face-to-face encounter with Almighty God.

2. Biblical Preaching Uplifts God's Works: 1 Peter 2:9, Titus 1:3. Biblical preaching declares the praises of God; it lifts up the mighty works of God. Whether it be God's creation or whether it be His hand in sustaining human life, Biblical preaching declares the praises of God.
3. Bible Preaching Always Glorifies Jesus Christ: 1 Cor 1:23; 2:2. Bible preaching causes us to come face-to-face with God, His Word, and His will for our lives.

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Approach God Through Personal Response

1. Response is the Key: James 1:22, Psalm 119:7, Luke 24:32. God's will is that His Word would quickly touch our hearts, impact our lives, and change our behavior. Do you start your day longing to meet with God and to draw closer to Him? Do you start the day with expectation that God has given you a new day and He is going to do something in your life today?

Memory Saying: Preaching is not aimed at your intellect; it is aimed at your heart.

2. God's Word Is a Guide for the Christian: Psalm 119:105. {Expound on this and illustrate with an example such as a compass and map, or using a flashlight to find the outhouse while you are camping, etc.}

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Approaching God Boldly

Come Boldly: Hebrews 10:19-23

Prayer doesn't come naturally, especially in our early walk. Like learning anything new, it takes effort and feels unnatural. And, stopping to ask for help isn't usually our way of doing things.

1. A new way to enter His presence. Hebrews 10:9-12. God has created us for the purpose of fellowshiping with him.
2. Enter with boldness. Hebrews 10:19. You now have boldness to enter into the holiest of holies by a new and living way. This was revolutionary to the Jews. A completely new way of thinking and an entirely new way of approaching God. Do we take it for granted?
3. Come boldly only through the blood. On what basis do we Christians enter boldly into such a close communion with God? John 1:14, Mark 15:37-38. Only faith in Jesus Christ can give a man instant access to God. Not through works, Mary, or dead saints, or your priest or pastor. Nobody is "good enough" to approach of their own merit. Isaiah 64:6.

Come Personally: Hebrews 10:21-22, Hebrews 4:15.

1. God wants us to come personally. He is touched with a perfect understanding of how you feel. He is always there for His children to come directly to Him.
2. Come with a prepared heart. Hebrews 10:22, James 1:6-8. What does it mean to have our hearts sprinkled? We are to have them ready and clean for God by confession of sin. 1 John 1:9 God's promise. And another, Jeremiah 29:13.

Come Faithfully: Hebrews 10:23

1. Hold fast to your profession of faith. 2 Timothy 1:12.
2. God's nature when I approach Him, Matthew 7:7-11.
3. All the privileges of a son.

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Approaching God Worshipfully

Defining worship and the object of our worship:

Psalm 95:1-8, Rev 4:11, Rev 5:12, John 4:24. Worship involves that which is subjective and that which is objective. Worship is that which is subjective and that which is objective. Truth without spirit will produce empty worship, and spirit without truth will produce ungodly worship.

The Acknowledgment of Our Worship: Psalm 95:3.

As we worship Him, we are acknowledging His position over us. We do not worship God to get things from Him. We worship Him to acknowledge His greatness, His power, and His worthiness.

1. He is our Creator. Psalm 95:4-5. Psalm 19:1
2. He is our Redeemer. John 1:29.
3. He is our King. Psalm 95:3, Revelation 11:15

For worship to be true and pure, Jesus Christ must be ruling and reigning as the King of our hearts.

The Attitude of Our Worship:

1. Worship should be joyful - Psalm 95:1
2. Worship should be thankful - Psalm 95:2
3. Worship should be reverent - Psalm 95:6, 34:9. Isaiah 6:1-5.

The Action of Our Worship:

1. True Worship will always serve. Worship is more than having the right attitude; worship involves action.
2. True Worship will always involve my whole life. Romans 12:1. True worship involves the change of a life when I say, "Lord, here's my life; I lay it on the altar as a sacrifice to You. Lord, if You want to use my hands to help someone this week, then I will worship You through that service. Lord, if You want to use my lips to proclaim Your love, then I surrender them to You. If You want to use my feet to go and tell someone about You, then I'll be glad to go Lord, I present my entire self to You.
3. True worship will always transform. Romans 12:2. Pure, bible-based worship will always produce a change in our lives as Christians. If you are involved in forms of

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worship that never bring change in your life, then you are involved in things that are not truly Christian worship. True Christian worship involves a heart attitude that says, “Lord, I want you to transform me”.

The Adversaries of Our Worship

1. My Own Heart—an adversary? Psalm 95:8
2. Satan himself an adversary. Even wanted Jesus to worship him, he’ll tempt us as well. Matthew 4:9-10. Satan wants us to bow to the things of this world. Many worship Jesus for an hour on Sunday and Satan the rest of the week.

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Approaching God With Praise

Where is God?

Many Christians have experienced circumstances that bring bitterness into the heart, which causes them to withdraw from God's people and from the things they once enjoyed. To these Christians, God always seems very far away. The closeness that once existed is replaced by a feeling of deep emptiness and loneliness. The real reason is due to the lack of genuine praise from our hearts.

The Bible teaches that God inhabits the praise of His people. Therefore, if we truly praise, God will always show up.

Memory Saying: Praise is faith turned inside out.

The Praise of Mary: Luke 1:26-35

Mary's personal praise - think about her situation for a moment...{ describe teenager situation and the angel thing } We would normally want to run and get away. We don't want to accept what God is doing in our life. Yet, like Mary, we stay right where we are knowing God is in control and He will work it all out. Do what seems most unnatural at this point - praise.

Mary's Hymn of Praise Luke 1:46-54

Her hymn of praise was from the heart. It was biblically based.

Mary's powerful praise - v. 46 - praise that magnifies the Lord is always a powerful praise. Praise is powerless unless it is directed to God. Praise that magnifies things before the Lord is powerless praise. It serves no eternal purpose and brings no fruitful results.

The most powerful praise we can give to God is scriptural praise. It pleases God and strengthens our Christian lives. Col 3:16 - *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and exhorting one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, all with grace in your hearts to God.*

The praise of Christians should cause the world to be drawn to an uplifted Savior. We should leave this house with a song stuck in our head singing scripture.

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Mary's response to this angel thing should challenge us to praise God even when the twists and turns of our lives don't follow in line with our plans. The world around us is powerfully impacted when we respond to difficult situations with sincere praise.

The Praise of Angels: Luke 2:8-14

In the distant past beyond Mary was a host of angels who have defied God and separated from Him to follow their wicked leader, Lucifer. They rejected God and chose rebellion and a rebellious leader. The angels in Luke 2 are those who did not, they remained pure and faithful.

Their praise was pointed. "Glory to God in the highest". This same praise is going on in Heaven then, today, tomorrow: Revelation 5:11-12

Like the angels, our praise should point clearly to Jesus Christ. It not only pleases God but it clearly points the lost and dying to a living Savior.

The angels praise all the day long. We should too.

Ps 35:28 Then I will tell others about your justice, and praise you all day long.

Many people wait until Sunday or Christmas or Easter or Thanksgiving Day to praise God for anything good in life. We ought to do it every day regardless of the circumstances we should be thankful for what God has done. What has he done in your life?

The goal of our life ought to be to praise and magnify Jesus Christ during every moment of every day.

The Praise of Shepherds Luke 2:20

Praising God for what they had seen and heard.

Must be something wrong in Christians who have been saved out of the darkness and can't even utter a holy grunt. When we come into the presence of God and let Him change our life, we will not be able to keep from praising Him for His goodness.

The Journey of Faith ends in Praise

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The journey that begins in faith will always end in praise. The shepherds moved by faith to that place of promise and when they saw what God had done, their journey of faith ended in praise.

Each of us has a journey of faith laid out before us. It may be centered around a job, a loved one, those with specific needs. If you will step out and begin that journey, the end result will ALWAYS be praise to God.

No matter where you are, you have reason to rejoice and praise God. You have been called out of the darkness and saved from the wrath to come. Why don't you now get rid of the negative spirit?! Determine to praise God with your entire life.

A life of praise in the midst of abnormal circumstances will transform your life. It will transform the life of others around you.

This is the purpose of gathering at church - not to demonstrate your holiness but to spur others on. To let the Spirit spur you on. To be spurred on. Mary made a choice to praise in the midst of odd circumstances and billions are changed because of it.

Memory Saying: Praise is a choice.

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Approaching God Humbly

As we seek to follow the example that Jesus gave for our prayers, coming to God with sincere humility is part of that pattern. Humility is the act of understanding the condition of my life in God's sight. Coming into God's sight means we must be honest with ourselves about our true condition. This is not always easy to do.

Three Types of Confession:

1. Salvation - Romans 10:9-10.
2. Public - done through baptism - Matthew 10:32.
3. Of sin - 1 John 1:9.

Pride and self-deceit hinder confession. Confession helps me to maintain a close walk and sweet fellowship with God. We do not lose our salvation because we have sinned.

"Cover-up" Theology is where we think God doesn't know about our sin so we don't confess it. However, when you come honestly before God in confession, results will take place!

Confession says, "God is Right": 1 John 1:5-10. We must name our specific sins. Then we need to get go of the sin. *"Lord, I'm willing to let go of _____ so that I can be washed clean."*

Confession Restores Fellowship: Much like when we have an argument with someone, our fellowship or closeness is broken until we "make up". Confession makes forgiveness real in my heart.

Illustration: Luke 15:11-32.

Memory Saying: Sin will cause you to live a very lonely and destitute life.

Confession Revitalizes Prayer: This is powerful. Begin your prayer time with confession. Sin is always a hindrance to hearing from God. Isaiah 59:1-2.

Following is a list of 5 hindrances:

1. Wrong Motives. James 4:3
2. Sin in the Heart. Isaiah 59:2
3. An Unforgiving Spirit. Mark 11:25
4. Selfishness. Proverbs 21:3
5. Apathy in Marriage. 1 Peter 3:7. When we do not properly care for our spouses, our prayers are hindered.

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Approaching God Thankfully

In tragedy most people instantly develop a very fervent prayer life. This is good, but the sad part is that we only come to God when facing tragedy and not when we are thankful. God delights in hearing us say, “thank-you”. Psalm 100, Phillipians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Leviticus 7:11-15, Psalm 95:2.

A Reflection of the Heart:

1. Thankful people are Joyful People. Take your eyes off your trials and troubles and aim them at your blessings. List the great things that God has done for you. Your burdened and angry heart will give way to joy.
2. Thankful people are Serving People. Psalm 100:2. The best kind of service we can offer tot he Lord is service from a heart of thanks. If you are truly worshipping with thankfulness, then you will serve with gladness.
3. Thankful people are Praising People. Thankful people sing the praises of God. Heartfelt singing is the natural overflow of a thankful heart.

Thankfulness Brings Action:

1. Thanks Will Always Involve Giving. Heartfelt appreciation will always involve heartfelt sacrifice. A thankful Christian will enter into the house of the Lord for corporate worship and the giving of thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ. In the light of God’s goodness, trials and pressures seem much smaller.

Memory Saying: When we give thanks to God, it turns our worship into action.

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Approaching God Prayerfully

The greatest way to develop a heart for God is through prayer. Do you pray? If so, are your prayers being answered? The greatest central truth about prayer is that we are helpless without God. Prayer is perhaps the single greatest expression of faith and trust in God that a Christian can make. Faith is a gift from God, and if you ask Him, He will increase your faith. Luke 17:5

Memory Saying: You cannot live on yesterdays faith.

Illustration: God has given us several “doors of prayer”. Just as a building has more than one door to enter, we can pray to God through different “doors” that He has given us in His Word.

1. **The Door of God’s Will:** James 4:1-3, 1 John 5:14. The bible is very clear—for our prayers to be answered, they must be in accordance wit God’s will.
 - a. You don’t have to pray for things that God has already told us in His Word. Example, “should I write out my tithe check?” or “should I go to church this week?” We already know that to be in God’s will.
 - b. Praying In Jesus’ Name. John 14:13. Praying in Jesus’ name means “I’m praying according to Your will.” God accepts us because we are known by Jesus’ name.
 - c. Finding God’s Will is done by studying His Word, spending time with Him in prayer, waiting on His timing, seeking out His wisdom, bringing your request to Him in the light of what you believe to be His will, and acknowledging His answers to your prayers. God delights in answering prayers that are lifted to Him through this door!
2. **The Door of Confession:** Psalm 66:18, Isaiah 59:1. Hidden sin hinders prayer. The Bible teaches that if we willfully keep sin in our lives or if we willfully try to hide sin, the Lord does not hear us when we pray. If married, and we are not “right” with our spouse our prayers will be hindered. We need to get honest with God by naming the specific sin, confessing it, and forsake it.
 - a. Christians today are falling prey to lifestyles of gossip, immorality, impure thoughts, wrong attitudes, and bitterness. As a result their prayer lives are nearly non-existent. God will not hear the prayer of a Christian who is willfully harboring sin.

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3. **The Door of Earnest Prayer:** James 5:16-17. The Bible says that Elijah was a man who faced the same passions and trials we face. Yet in his ordinariness he prayed according to God's will and it did not rain for 3 years.
 - a. Do your trials cause you to come earnestly to God? Usually we first try to work them out in our own strength and wisdom. We wait till the last resort to come to God. We should come to God first.
 - b. Pray earnestly. Ephesians 6:18. We should be at least as earnest about praying as we are about our fishing or hunting equipment and ATV's. Rejoice when you find yourself in an impossible situation. Earnestly pray about it and watch God respond. God knows where you are and what you are going through and is just waiting for you to come to Him in prayer.
4. **The Door of Agreement:** Matthew 18:18. It is no small decision by church elders to help you walk out your Christian life—especially when discipline is required.
 - a. The Bible says that if something is bound on earth, then it is bound in Heaven. When a church matter is carried out properly, God is taking note of it. When a Christian rebels against the things of God and blasphemes the Lord or the church to the extent that he rejects loving restoration, the church is biblically required to take action.
 - b. Matthew 18:19, Acts 1:14, 2:41-42 - agreement with another Christian.
5. **The Door of Fasting:** Matthew 17:14-21. Fasting is communicating to God that we have no desire for earthly pleasure until we have His power and know His will for our lives. The answer we are seeking is more important to me than my belly or physical desire.

Conclusion

Through this study you have been exposed on how to approaching God With Faith, Biblically, Boldly, Worshipfully, With Praise, Humbly, Thankfully and Prayerfully.

You have learned the Biblical answer to the question in people's heart, "How do I hear from God?" Can you fathom that? The single greatest authority in the universe will speak to you personally! This fact should humble us rather than pump us up with arrogance. You have gained the keys to hearing from God without having to go through another person. Now the question is, will you be found obedient to God's statements?