

PRAISE FOR *CREATED TO HEAR GOD*

“Havilah is the little sister I never had. She’s fierce and kind, and she has a gift for demystifying spiritual topics with her ‘let’s get real’ approach. If you’re out there wondering if God still speaks and if He wants to speak to you, this is your book. Havilah unpacks the truth that God is always speaking and equips you with practical tools so you can recognize His voice like you would recognize the voice of a friend. I’m a firm believer that God wants to talk to you more than you want to hear from Him. Grab this book, a pen, and a journal, and get ready to hear from Him.”

**–LISA BEVERE, NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
*GODMOTHERS, WITHOUT RIVAL, AND LIONESSE ARISING***

“There are certain subjects in the church that feel like they’ve been elevated so high, they’ve become unreachable. Being led by the spirit is one of those, even though it’s meant to be a normal part of life for every believer. That’s why I’m thrilled Havilah has brought us this book, *Created to Hear God*, to teach us how to discern the voice of God and be led by the spirit. Havilah is one of the most gifted communicators I know. Her stories and insights, laced with fabulous humor, are just as impactful as they are practical. I believe this book will be a source of inspiration and encouragement for everyone who reads it.”

**–BILL JOHNSON, SENIOR PASTOR OF BETHEL CHURCH AND AUTHOR OF
*WHEN HEAVEN INVADES EARTH, GOD IS GOOD, AND THE RESTING PLACE***

“I am so grateful for Havilah’s trusted and prophetic voice. She is not only committed to helping us understand this vital spiritual gift, but teaches us how to exercise it with compassion, integrity, and wisdom.”

**–CHRISTINE CAINE, BESTSELLING AUTHOR AND
FOUNDER OF A21 AND PROPEL WOMEN**

“God wants to speak to you! You don’t have to be a seminary student to hear His voice. You don’t have to be a worship leader, teacher, preacher, or evangelist either. I love how Havilah has taken something that feels like it’s reserved for only the most spiritual and made it accessible to anyone who wants it.”

**–BIANCA JUAREZ OLTHOFF, PASTOR, PODCASTER, AND
BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *GRIT DON’T QUIT***

“Sitting down with Havilah is like being treated by a spiritual audiologist. Every time I’m with her, I walk away hearing God’s voice more clearly! I can pretty much guarantee you’ll feel the same way after making your way through the pages of this book. *Created to Hear God* cuts through the lofty language Christians often use and breaks things down in a way that feels accessible. This book is an invitation to step away from the static of our all-too-busy lives and focus on the Lover of our soul so we can experience the miracle of communing with Him.”

–LISA HARPER, AUTHOR OF *A PERFECT MESS* AND *BELIEVING JESUS*

“Havilah’s new book, *Created to Hear God*, uncomplicates the spiritual principle of our divine design and innate nature to hear the voice of God and gives practical insight for understanding how you were uniquely created to hear the voice of God. Havilah has been a daughter to me for several decades. I count it an honor to watch the Lord fan the flame within her to teach and equip a generation to step into the fullness of who they were created to be. This book is a representation of the revelatory and applicable message she carries for every believer that will be a catalyst to partnering with the voice of God in your life.”

–KRIS VALLOTTON, SENIOR ASSOCIATE LEADER OF BETHEL CHURCH AND AUTHOR OF *THE SUPERNATURAL WAYS OF ROYALTY, SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE, AND UPRISING*

“Havilah is the real deal. I’ve known her for twenty-five years, and she is an authentic and powerful communicator who loves the word of God. My prayer for you as you read this book is that you’d hear God’s voice more clearly and come to know Him more deeply. May her words inspire you to seek His voice and run after Him with all you have.”

–JENN JOHNSON, WORSHIP LEADER, SONGWRITER, AND PRESIDENT OF BETHEL MUSIC

“I am so happy Havilah wrote this book. Too often we overcomplicate things like hearing God’s voice and being led by Him, leaving us confused and doubting, instead of moving forward into all that He has for us. In this practical guidebook, Havilah gives us the tools we need to discern the voice of God so we can walk in even deeper relationship with Him.”

–REAL TALK KIM, SENIOR PASTOR AT LIMITLESS CHURCH AND AUTHOR OF *YOU GOTTA GET UP!*

“People are hungry for really knowing God and hearing His voice. We are hearing people from all walks of life share their encounters with God and hearing His voice, everywhere from music legend Dolly Parton to former vice president Mike Pence to celebrities like Denzel Washington. This is one of the pressing themes in culture right now, but there is a gap between sound biblical teaching that can activate this more in your life, and just having belief that it ‘could’ happen. That is where Havilah’s expertise comes in. In *Created to Hear God* she expertly and theologically examines the prophetic personality types in the Bible. You will find yourself in these pages. Even better, this will be a new tool that is exactly on time for your own journey in hearing God and understanding his process in your life and for those around you.”

**–SHAWN BOLZ, PRESIDENT OF BOLZ MINISTRIES
AND AUTHOR OF *TRANSLATING GOD***

“Havilah is one of my favorite storytellers. Her comedic timing is only matched by her ability to gently expose the human condition in all its grit and glory with a wink. She delivers truth in a way that makes you feel an immense sense of clarity, belonging, and camaraderie. If you’ve felt a longing in your heart to draw near to your Creator and hear His voice, this book is bound to give you the tools you’ve been looking for.”

–AMANDA COOK, SINGER AND SONGWRITER

**CREATED
TO HEAR
GOD**



CREATED TO HEAR GOD

**4 UNIQUE AND PROVEN WAYS TO
CONFIDENTLY DISCERN HIS VOICE**

HAVILAH CUNNINGTON



**NELSON
BOOKS**

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Created to Hear God

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Names and identifying characteristics of some individuals have been changed to preserve their privacy.

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*To my husband, Ben.
My favorite Feeler.*

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"The man who guards the gate opens the gate for the shepherd. And the sheep listen to the voice of the shepherd. He calls his own sheep, using their names, and he leads them out. He brings all of his sheep out. Then he goes ahead of them and leads them. The sheep follow him, because they know his voice. But sheep will never follow someone they don't know. They will run away from him, because they don't know his voice."

-JOHN 10:3-5 ERV





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"GOD SPOKE TO ME."

What comes to your mind when you hear someone make that claim?

Maybe you feel skeptical: "Wait a minute, did the Almighty actually have a direct, audible conversation with this person? Is that even a thing these days?"

Maybe a twinge of worry makes you take a step back: "Oh no, I hope this person isn't going to go all preachy and fanatical on me. I'm all for being spiritual, but let's keep it real and grounded."

The claim might spark offense: "Seriously? Everything we need to hear from God is right there in the Bible. End of story. Asking for more than that is just asking for trouble."

You might feel angry enough to shut down the announcement before it starts: "Oh no you don't. I'm not about to let you run over me with your manipulative power scheme!"

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Envy might rise to the surface. Someone around you may be claiming that God talks to them, and you begin to wonder, *Hold on a minute! Why does everyone else luck out in this department except for me? What's the deal?*

But let me tell you, there's another reaction worth exploring—a profound sense of awe. Just think about it: the reality that God takes the time to communicate with us humans is mind-blowing! It's absolutely incredible. So, naturally, you're eager to know what He said. You're hungry for those divine messages.

How you react when someone claims they've heard God's voice often depends on what you know (or don't know) about that person. If it's your best friend making the claim, you might give them more credit than a random stranger. But here's the deal, regardless of your thoughts on the matter: The fact that you're reading this book tells me something pretty important about you. It tells me that deep down you're curious to find out if you're one of those special people designed to hear from the Divine.

Guess what? You're not wrong. You absolutely are! And I have a wealth of wisdom to share about what it means:

- You are included.
- You were created by God for a beautiful connection with Him.
- You have the ability to recognize and know His voice.

The truth is, God communicates with us. He specifically created and designed us to hear Him. As Jesus said, He calls us—His own sheep—individually and by name, leading us along our unique paths.

Now, when I talk about hearing God, of course I'm referring

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to the ways He speaks to us through His Word and the authorities He has placed in our lives. But it goes beyond that, my friend. You may have been taught that we Christians aren't meant to hear God's voice directly and should seek His guidance solely through the Bible. While God's Word is the ultimate authority and any message we receive from God must align with it, the truth is that He has personal, specific things to say to each and every one of us, in addition to what is written in the Bible.

Also, He communicates with us in diverse and incredible ways. Unveiling how you best hear God in these other ways is the heart of this book. I'm here to guide you on this extraordinary journey of discovering and embracing the myriad ways God speaks to you.

So, my friend, get ready for an incredible journey. We're going to explore, learn, and grow together as we uncover the rich tapestry of divine communication. Let's find out how you can open up and receive the messages the Divine has in store for you. It's time to embrace the adventure of hearing God's voice in a whole new way!

If you'd known me when I was first learning to hear God's voice, you would have known my main focus wasn't on changing the world. Nope, it was all about getting some inside scoop on my future hubby. I wanted to know his name, recognize him at first sight, and get a sneak peek at when we'd finally meet. Can you blame me? I was curious!

I was convinced that hearing the voice of God would be the ultimate game changer in my life. I mean, who wouldn't want that, right? I thought I'd become this discerning leader, effortlessly navigating the perfect and righteous path while unveiling my hidden superhero role in helping and serving others. It was like having

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a secret access code to success and recognition, as if God would personally hand me a gold plaque that read, “Congratulations on discovering your unique purpose!” Talk about depth and meaning!

But wait, there’s more! Hearing God’s voice would be my own personal shield of knowledge and understanding, protecting my boundaries like an impenetrable force field. It would give me crystal clear guidance and reassurance, making me the Jedi Master of life’s uncertainties. And let’s not forget that God’s voice would lead me on exciting adventures and fulfill all my wildest dreams! Relationships? *No problem!* With God’s divine insights, I’d achieve inner peace and become the ultimate conflict resolver. I mean, who needs therapy when you’ve got the heavenly hotline? Yeah, hearing God’s voice would be a total game changer. You get the picture.

But I had no idea this journey would lead me to where I am now, reaching and helping so many people (all while happily married!). I also didn’t know how critical and life-changing it would be to have a constant connection to the voice of God. There is nothing like knowing you never again have to face life on your own, unable to access God’s wisdom for any circumstance you might face.

I’ve spent the last twenty-five years learning, practicing, and mastering the art of hearing God’s voice for myself and others. As the women’s pastor at Bethel Church and the cofounder with my husband of our nonprofit ministry, Truth to Table, I’m humbled to have guided thousands of people through my Prophetic Personalities course, which is designed to lead people into a deep understanding of this truth: God is not silent—you just haven’t been taught how *you* are uniquely created to hear Him.

That truth is so important I’m going to say it again: God made you with the capacity to hear His voice. But maybe, just maybe, the *way* He made you to hear isn’t what you expect.

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From the moment I learned how to hear God, I began to grasp that He really is always speaking. I began to experience the truth that He is all-knowing, all-powerful, and always available. Now you have the same opportunity!

I know from experience that some of you are raring to go right now. Feel free to dive right into chapter 1. But a few of you might need to stand on the shore for a few more minutes. That's all right. Maybe you're unsure whether it's possible for a person to hear God speak. Maybe you feel as if you're the only person you know who doesn't hear God's voice, while everyone around you has a direct line. Fear asks, *What if I still can't even after reading this book?*

Maybe you're a new Christian, still trying to understand how it all works, or perhaps you've been following Jesus for years but have never grasped what it means to hear Him speak to you and speak over your life. Maybe you worry God doesn't care about your needs or that He's too preoccupied to listen to what you have to say. Maybe you've always heard God's voice, but the people in your life who also love God *aren't* hearing Him, or don't hear Him the way you do, and you wonder why. Maybe you just can't shake the feeling that there's something more to your relationship with God, and it keeps you up at night.

When it comes to the voice of God, whatever you feel, think, wonder, or worry about, I assure you that you're not alone. If you've experienced any of the above, come with me into the following pages. We'll talk about all of it.

I'm going to teach you about the different ways in which God speaks to us based on our uniquely created design, and I'm going to help you discover how God wired you to hear Him so you never need to doubt again.

You'll learn to hear God with such confidence that you won't

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be distracted by what He said to your pastor, your best friend, or the influencers you follow. You'll come to know what hearing God is really about: waking up to who you truly are, embracing your identity as a loved child of God, and living that out every single day.

Once you finally grasp the truth that you are a child of God, something extraordinary happens. You can fully trust that God is speaking to you just as loudly and clearly as He is speaking to every other soul on this planet. You can cultivate that unshakable confidence to attune your ears to His divine voice and fearlessly tread the path He lays before you, knowing that you're loved and valued by the One who created you.

A few of you are still standing on the shore, toeing the water.

I can imagine you thinking, *I don't know, Havilah. Things get dangerous when humans walk around saying God spoke to them. And now you're telling us everyone hears differently? People can't be trusted. They do terrible things in God's name.*

You wouldn't be wrong. People *have* used claims about God's voice to manipulate and abuse others. These behaviors are terrible, heartbreaking, and definitely not of God. But they are nothing to be feared. In chapter 14 I'll talk about how to establish safeguards for yourself and others, safeguards rooted in God's Word and authority. That some people abuse claims about God's voice is no reason to cut yourself off from your one true life-giving source. This is one of the reasons I'm so passionate about teaching this topic.

When you agree that God wants to speak to you and you can hear from Him, you can begin to apply yourself to learning what His voice sounds like. You no longer have to rely on a secondhand

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experience, hearing God only through others. You can learn how He made *you* to hear—maybe through your ears, but quite possibly with your eyes or your heart or your mind. I'm going to help you figure out which way of hearing is your strongest.

If you're new to the idea that God speaks to individuals, spend some time with me in the following pages. If you would, please approach with an open mind and a willingness to explore a new perspective on God's voice. Do you trust Him to be present in this process? I do. With His help I'm going to demystify some common but misguided beliefs about how He speaks and how people hear. I'm going to show you what's possible through God. Trust me. I believe you're going to experience a real breakthrough.

Come on in. The water's fine!



QUESTIONS WE'RE EMBARRASSED TO ASK





O N E

WHY CAN'T I HEAR GOD?

“When you come looking for me, you’ll find me. Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, I’ll make sure you won’t be disappointed.”

–JEREMIAH 29:13–14 MSG

WHEN MY TWIN SISTER AND I WERE KIDS, OUR DAD BURST into the room one day, a glimmer of enthusiasm in his eyes. “Girls, listen up! God spoke to me. He told me about this guy named Paul, sitting on a porch in a blue shirt. We’re going on an adventure to find him!”

Full of excitement, Deborah and I hopped into the car. We were going on a treasure hunt for a man wearing a blue shirt!

Dad drove around while Deb and I scanned both sides of the street, noses to the windows, looking for this Paul. I don’t remember who first spotted the man sitting on a porch, but it wasn’t too long before Dad pulled the car to the curb. Sure enough, the guy was wearing a blue shirt.

Dad climbed out of the car and asked him, “Is your name Paul?”

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A hint of wariness appeared in Paul's eyes as he cautiously replied, "Yes, that's me." He stood up to greet us. Without missing a beat, Dad dove right in. "You might find this surprising, but I'm a Christian, and I have conversations with God. And, well, God spoke to me about you. He revealed your name and said I would find you sitting on a porch, wearing blue. God brought me here, Paul, because I believe He wants to intervene in your life."

The man was so shocked he couldn't speak at first. Then, overwhelmed with emotion, Paul began to weep. Trying to get the words out, he admitted he was not a praying man, but he was in desperate need of help. That self-confessed nonpraying man had said a prayer that day, not for a second anticipating that God would answer his prayer by sending my dad to help him.

At this point both men started crying.

My dad asked if he could talk with Paul about God, and the man agreed. As my sister and I looked on, Dad told him the gospel story. "Just like God sent me today to find you," Dad said, "God sent His Son on a mission to Earth to seek and save all those who are lost."

I'll never forget that moment. Right there on the porch, Paul joined my dad in a heartfelt prayer, surrendering his life to Jesus.

That was the environment I grew up in—a place filled with divine encounters. My dad had a prophetic gift and an uncanny ability to discern God's voice, not only for himself but for others as well. It was through him that I first grasped the concept of hearing from God.

It sounds exciting, but it was also intimidating. People who knew my father would often say to me, "Oh, you must hear God too! Are you prophetic?"

They meant it kindly, but honestly, it was really discouraging. Because all I knew for sure was that I was the girl who couldn't hear God's voice.

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It wasn't that I couldn't hear *any* voices. In fact, I'm pretty sure I was always hearing at least three: my voice, the enemy's voice, and the voice of God. The problem was, I couldn't figure out which one was which. Who was doing the talking?

That's a pretty big problem. If I asked God a question and an answer came to mind, it would only spark more questions. I'd think, *Wait . . . is that God talking to me? Then I should probably listen. But what if it's the devil and he's trying to tempt me? I should ignore him!* Or even worse, *What if all the chatter is my own self-talk, and the truth is I just need a good night's sleep . . . or therapy?*

Maybe it wouldn't have been so hard if I wasn't constantly surrounded by people who talked *a lot* about God speaking to them. Each story would send me on a journey, and I'd do whatever I could to find the voice of God for myself. I'd zealously buy the book, attend the conference, read the scriptures, join the prayer line, fast for forty days, and lead the prayer meeting. I was the desperate girl wearing the Take My Money T-shirt, and anyone who had anything remotely promising to sell me could have it.

I was constantly trying to get my God channel turned on, but the cable guy never arrived. I couldn't shake the feeling that something was wrong with me.

Why on earth couldn't I hear God clearly? Was He unhappy with my choices? Had I done something to upset Him? I knew I wasn't disqualified from sharing my faith with others and living a life guided by my love for God. But was I willing to accept that I might *never* hear His voice? Was it okay for me to spend yet another year wandering from one conference to another, reading book after book, trying to live my best life without really knowing if it was the life I was meant to live?

Eventually defeated, having tried everything I knew to do, I

told myself, “Havilah, your faith in God is enough. You don’t need to hear a voice.”

That worked for a while, until it didn’t.

Inevitably, believers I admired—friends, teachers, leaders, influencers, athletes, movers and shakers, my heroes of the faith—would make some kind of declaration about having heard from God. Over and over, I heard phrases like:

“And that’s when God spoke to me.”

“That was the moment God told me _____.”

“God said I was going to marry that person.”

“I saw myself running that business and knew the vision was from God.”

The most influential people in my world were hearing God speak to them, and what they heard was changing the trajectory of their lives. It was an undeniable truth: they were guided by divine wisdom, while I felt completely disconnected, spiraling into a pit of spiritual turmoil. The combination of my spiritual anxiety and clichéd phrases like “carpe diem” or “You have only one life, so make it count” created a tumultuous internal storm. I felt like raising my hand to say, “Excuse me! May I ask you a question? Would you please shut up?! You’re giving me more anxiety.”

WHAT MAKES HEARING GOD SO HARD?

I don’t know one human who hasn’t woken up in a cold sweat over important decisions that have to be made. “How do I know if I should marry that specific person?” “Should I take that job

WHY CAN'T I HEAR GOD?

opportunity? Is it time to move? What about the kids? Is it time to leave or stay? Invest or save?" "What's the best way to handle this relationship problem I'm having?"

And that's just on a Monday.

Then, after we make a choice, we move to obsessing whether it's the right choice. We're in limbo. We feel as if we're in our own little mental purgatory, somewhere between "I have a critical question I need answered" and "Whew . . . I made it to my therapist's office!" It's overwhelming.

We run to church, or better yet, catch an online service, hoping the worship leader or the pastor on the stage will say something to give us our much-needed answer. Or at least something to ease the nagging anxiety that we're messing up everything. Maybe we'll find the missing corner piece to our life's puzzle. Someone might hand us the answer we desperately need.

It isn't often that going to church stops the questions from bouncing around in our heads.

How do I know if it's God speaking to me?


What if it's the devil tormenting me?

What if I'm getting in my own way by just thinking what I want to hear and then slapping a God sticker on it?

We buy the journals labeled "Goal Chasers" or "Dream Bigger." We repost meaningful quotes to exude a sense of confidence that uncertainty is normal. We mimic others who seem to know what God is saying, people who look like they have it all together. We buy the books, attend the retreats, read the Bible, and consume a ton of information but never find that core confidence that we *can* and *do* hear God.

With all the available help, why aren't we more certain about our sense of things?

A lack of devotion to God is usually not the problem. At the time of my own crisis, I was wholly committed to God. This was not a problem of spiritual apathy. What fascinates me when I look back on this thread in my life is that my commitment began with a surreal confidence that I *had* heard the voice of God!



**A lack of
devotion to God
is usually not
the problem.**

When I was seventeen years old, I had a life-altering moment.

The night started like any other night. Some guys had picked up my sister and me, and we were headed to a party. But in the darkness of that car, in the nauseating normal, something life-changing happened.

I sensed something shifting in the car. I now know it was the Holy Spirit. I began to hear God speaking to me in my heart.

He said, *Havilah, what are you doing? I've called you to more than living for the weekend. You cannot live like this anymore. You have a destiny and a calling. You've got to be courageous! Fight for your life! Get out of here!*

He had my full attention. As my mind began to race, time seemed to stand still and my heart beat wildly. I felt I couldn't be silent any longer. I asked the guys to turn down the music so I could speak. I blurted out, "I have a call of God on my life!"

I wish I could convey how utterly awkward this moment was. There was no piano player or pastor in the background. No one nodding in affirmation as I made this proclamation. Quite the opposite. An uncomfortable silence filled the car, and the dark silhouettes of the two guys in the front seat didn't move. Nothing about it felt spiritual. And yet I was confident God had spoken to me.

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Spoiler alert: I didn't go to the party, and I've been serving God ever since.¹

Even though that encounter with God profoundly changed my life, it didn't spare me from confusion about what it means to hear from God. How could that young woman also be the one who couldn't distinguish God's voice from racing thoughts or a bad night's sleep? From that day on I jumped into the deep end of my faith, staying busy with our church by volunteering, serving, and learning. I was doing my best to grow and develop my life.

But when the noise of each day faded and I was left alone with my thoughts, a deep longing settled into my soul. I knew there *must* be a way to access more of God. If He could tap me on the shoulder and say, *Follow Me*, then surely I could ask Him for guidance, right? Couldn't I also tap *Him* on the shoulder and ask Him anything at any time . . . and expect to get an answer? There had to be a way to stay in that miraculous secret space where I had heard God.

Even if we're 100 percent certain we've heard God speak to us at some point in our lives, our lack of confidence is a common problem. Why?

We all have our theories. For years I thought my learning disabilities were to blame. In the third grade I was diagnosed with dyslexia with reading and comprehension issues. Dyslexia is a neurological condition that makes it hard to process written words. I figured my issues might extend to understanding spoken words as well. I also got a diagnosis of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which can make it hard to focus for any length of time. Maybe I simply couldn't pay attention when God was talking to me. My sunny personality and sociability covered up this deep dark fear.

When I was fifteen, my sister and I joined a six-week summer program with a nonprofit called Youth with a Mission (YWAM). The

trip included learning presentations to perform up and down the midwestern states. Each morning after breakfast and before rehearsal, the staff sent all fifty of us kids off to our own private corners for a quiet time. Simply put, we would take personal time to invite God to speak to us. Bibles encouraged. Journals required.

I hated it.

I'd wander someplace no one else had discovered, only to sit there killing time for an hour. I didn't know how to hear God speak to me, so I didn't know what I was supposed to do. I had a deep ache for connection with Him. I had plenty of nagging, life-impacting questions, not the least of which was, *What did You create me to do, God?* But day after day I heard nothing but silence. I tried to read, I overshared in prayer, and eventually I wrote something down.

Two decades later, I picked up the journal from that summer. The first thing I read on the front page was, "God if You're there, I can't hear You."

Page two: "God, what are You saying to me?"

On another page: "Where are You?"

A few more pages had similar phrases.

The rest of the journal was blank.

As an adult with twenty years of wisdom under my belt, I held that journal in my hands and felt empathy for my younger self. I was able to see the truth for the first time: My struggle wasn't about my learning issues. It wasn't about my ADHD or that I didn't have an iPhone back then to read the Bible aloud to me. I wasn't lacking a spiritual mind-set or a pure heart. God wasn't waiting for me to get it together so I could be somehow holy enough to hear Him.

Are you ready for this?

Not hearing God speak to me was a universal problem I'd tragically interpreted as a personal problem. I wasn't alone in the struggle.

REASON #1: WE THINK THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO HEAR

Most of us are taught that hearing God's voice just happens. Listen hard enough and you will hear. God will come to you. We learn this from our parents or our pastors, small group leaders, spiritual mentors, and the church at large. "You'll know God's voice when you hear it," we're told. "All you need to do is ask . . . and ask . . . and ask again . . . you know . . . until your supernatural radio station comes in clearly. Add it to your list of saved stations and voilà! You now hear God!"

After all this, if you muster up the courage to admit you *still* can't hear God, that's when people in the know will go to the default answer: "Just read your Bible; that's how God speaks to you." Of course, the Bible is God's Word, and His printed words speak to us and help us. But deep down we know it's not enough to read the messages someone sends us when what we really want is to spend time in the same room with them. Knowing someone loves you is not the same as experiencing their love firsthand.

I, too, was taught all these things. This is nobody's fault. After all, that's exactly how it works for some people. "Read more, pray more, listen harder, listen better," makes perfect sense if it aligns with the way you are made. If not, you're out of luck.

Maybe you're naturally curious and willing to ask others when or how they hear God. This can be helpful—unless the story of their hearing is all about a lightning-bolt-from-heaven moment, confirming you're still basically in the dark, waiting to be struck yourself.

If you're part of the failed-results group, you might find yourself stuck in years of painful, pleading prayers, discouragement, and deep soul fatigue called *hopelessness*. You might give up. You might park yourself in the shadow of a spiritual person who hears God for

you. Or worse, you might resign yourself to faking it. I was usually in the fake-it-till-you-make-it camp, which seemed pretty lonely even though I wasn't the only one there.

In this lonely space it's easy for us to latch onto that false belief that everyone but you can hear God. Everyone but you knows the secret handshake. Here we draw dangerous conclusions: God is exclusive. He has favorites. There are only so many seats at the table, and they have all been taken. There is no space for you.

Tragically, this is where most of us disengage.

But I want to applaud you for being here, right now, reading this book. That means you haven't disengaged yet, and I'm thrilled about that. In the second and third sections of this book, we're going to get to all the ways in which God speaks to and through each of His children, including you.

REASON #2: WE HAVE OVERCOMPLICATED GOD

You're too spiritual. Yes, that's what I said. Your idyllic concept of spirituality as something separate from your day-to-day life is keeping you from hearing God spiritually *in* your day-to-day life.

Let me explain by asking you a question: What is spiritual?

Hmm, let's see. Going to church, praying, giving to the poor, helping the needy, worshiping, fasting, serving others—anything that involves an experience of God in a situation where we expect God to show up.

Okay, next question: What is unspiritual or secular?

You might list things like going to work, shopping for groceries, taking care of the kids, weeding the yard, taking vacations—ordinary, day-to-day events that don't involve an experience of God.

WHY CAN'T I HEAR GOD?


But do you honestly believe that God can't or won't be involved in the most mundane aspects of your life? Oddly, the ideology that some things are spiritual and other things are secular is everywhere in the church but hard to find in the Bible.

Pastor John Mark Comer writes:

Look up the word “spiritual” in Genesis to Malachi—the Bible used by Jesus. It's not there. Why? Because in a Hebrew worldview, all of life is spiritual. Even when you get to the New Testament, the word spiritual is really only used by Paul. In his writings, it means “animated by the Holy Spirit.” And for Paul, every facet of our lives should be spiritual. I think if you had asked Jesus about His spiritual life, He would have looked at you very confused. My guess is He would have asked, “What do you mean by My spiritual life? All of My life is spiritual.” Jesus didn't buy into sacred/secular thinking. To Him, life is a seamless, integrated, holistic experience where the sacred is all around us. And because everything is spiritual, everything matters to God.²

Even so, some of us can't avoid that some things just feel more spiritual and other things feel more secular. This is important because too many of us think that people who hear God are super-spiritual, and to hear God we must become *more* spiritual. This isn't true. *Spiritual* isn't something that you have to become; it's something that you already are in Christ. Just because somebody has a certain kind of spiritual gift—say,

Too many of us think that people who hear God are super-spiritual, and to hear God we must become *more* spiritual. This isn't true.



CREATED TO HEAR GOD

prophecy—doesn't mean your gifts, your ability to hear God, or anything you bring to the table aren't also profoundly spiritual in their own way.

We do contribute, my friends, not just as a mere habit but as a powerful tool to step fully into our identity in Christ. You see, it's not just about us; it's about blessing God and the people He places in our path. And here's the beautiful thing: we can do this in the most ordinary of situations.

It's amazing how often we stand in our own way when it comes to thinking we can't hear God. (We all do it—nothing to feel bad about.) But another thing that stands between us and God is simple ignorance. No one has ever explained why hearing God is important in the first place. In the next chapter, I'm going to do just that.