

## HOW TO LISTEN TO GOD

We're going to provide you with some additional material on how to establish a conscious contact with the God of your understanding. In the late 1930's, a friend of Dr. Bob's wrote a short essay titled, How to Listen to God. It is the one of the clearest set of instructions we have found on how to practice the 11<sup>th</sup> Step.

(Written in the late 1930's by John E. Batterson (A personal friend of Dr. Bob's — co-founder of A.A.) Distributed by Wally P., Archivist/ Historian/ Author)

We will briefly take you through this four-page pamphlet. It contains universal spiritual principles that can be applied by “anyone or everyone interested in a spiritual way of life.” We suggest you conduct your daily meditation based on these guidelines.

In the opening paragraphs the author states that “prayer and meditation” will change our lives:

- “These are a few simple suggestions for people who are willing to make an experiment. You can discover for yourself the most important and practical thing any human being can ever learn—how to be in touch with God.”
- “All that is needed is the willingness to try it honestly. Every person who has done this consistently and sincerely has found that it really works.”

We have found that two-way prayer “works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it.” With time and practice, it will “gradually become a working part of the mind.”

Before we begin, let's explore these fundamental points. They are based on the experience of thousands of people.

1. Your Higher Power is alive. Your Higher Power always has been and always will be.
2. Your Higher Power knows everything.
3. Your Higher Power can do anything.
4. Your Higher Power can be everywhere – all at the same time.
5. Your Higher Power is invisible – you can't see or touch your HP – but, HP is here. HP is with you now, beside you and surrounding you. Your Higher Power fills the room or the whole place where you are right now. HP is in you right now. HP is in your heart.
6. Your Higher Power cares very much for you. HP is interested in you. HP has a plan for your life. HP has an answer for every need and problem you face.
7. Your Higher Power will tell you all that you **need** to know. HP will not always tell you all that you **want** to know.
8. Your Higher Power will help you do anything that your HP asks you to do as long as you follow these conditions. Anyone can be in touch with their Higher Power, anywhere and at any time, if these conditions are observed.
  - To be quiet and still

- To listen
- To be honest about every thought that comes
- To test the thoughts to be sure that they come from your Higher Power
- To sincerely follow through with the guidance that comes (i.e. obey your Higher Power's direction for you)

So, with these basic elements as a background, here are specific suggestions on **How to Listen to God:**

1, Take Time.

Find some place and time where you can be alone quiet and undisturbed. Most people have found that the early morning is the best time. Have with you some paper and pen or pencil.

2. Relax.

Sit in a comfortable position. Consciously relax all your muscles. Be loose. There is no hurry. There needs to be no strain during these minutes. God cannot get through to us if we are tense and anxious about later responsibilities.

3. Tune In.

Open your heart to your Higher Power. Either silently or aloud, just say to Spirit in a natural way that you would like to find the plan for your life – you want Spirit's answer to the problem or situation that you are facing just now. Be definite and specific in your request.

4. Listen.

Just be still, quiet, relaxed and open. Let your mind go "loose." Let Spirit do the talking. Thoughts, ideas, and impressions will begin to come into your mind and heart. Be alert and aware and open to every one.

5. Write!

Here is the important key to the whole process. Write down everything that comes into your mind. Everything. Writing is simply a means of recording so that you can remember later. Don't sort out or edit your thoughts at this point.

Don't say to yourself: This thought isn't important; This is just an ordinary thought; This can't be guidance; This isn't nice; This can't be from my Higher Power; This is just me thinking..., etc.

Write down everything that passes through your mind:

- Names of people
- Things to do
- Things to say

- Things that are wrong and need to be made right

Write down everything: Good thoughts - bad thoughts; Comfortable thoughts - uncomfortable thoughts; "Holy" thoughts - "unholy" thoughts; Sensible thoughts - "crazy" thoughts.

Be honest! Write down everything! A thought comes quickly, and it escapes even more quickly unless it is captured and put down.

#### 6. Test.

When the flow of thoughts slows down, stop. Take a good look at what you have written. Not every thought we have comes from God. So we need to test our thoughts. Here is where the written record helps us to be able to look at them.

- a. Are these thoughts completely honest, pure, unselfish and loving?
- b. Are these thoughts in line with our duties to our family – to our community?
- c. Are these thoughts in line with our understanding of the teachings found in our spiritual literature?

#### 7. Check.

When in doubt and when it is important, what does another person who is living two-way prayer think about this thought or action? More light comes in through two windows than one. Someone else who also wants God's plan for our lives may help us to see more clearly.

Talk over together what you have written. Many people do this. They tell each other what guidance has come. This is the secret of unity. There are always three sides to every question – your side, my side, and the right side. Guidance shows us which is the right side – not who is right, but what is right.

#### 8. Follow the Guidance.

Carry out the thoughts that have come. You will only be sure of guidance as you go through with it. A rudder will not guide a boat until the boat is moving. As you follow the guidance, very often the results will convince you that you are on the right track.

#### 9. Blocks.

What if I don't seem to get any definite thoughts? God's guidance is as freely available as the air we breathe. If I am not receiving thoughts when I listen, the fault is not God's.

Usually it is because there is something I will not do: something wrong in my life that I will not face and make right; a habit or indulgence I will not give up, or a person I will not forgive; a wrong relationship in my life I will not give up; a restitution I will not

make; something my Higher Power has already told me to do that I will not follow through with.

Check these points and be honest. Then try listening again.

#### 10. Mistakes.

Suppose I make a mistake and do something in the name of God that isn't right? Of course we make mistakes. We are humans with many faults. However, God will always honor our sincerity.

God will work around and through every honest mistake we make. Our Higher Power will help us make it right. But remember this! Sometimes when we do obey God, someone else may not like it or agree with it. So when there is opposition, it doesn't always mean you have made a mistake. It can mean that the other person doesn't want to know or to do what is right.

Suppose I fail to do something that I have been told and the opportunity to do it passes? There is only one thing to do. Put it right with God. Tell Spirit you're sorry. Ask God to forgive you, then accept God's forgiveness and begin again. God is our Creator – God is not an impersonal calculator. God understands us far better than we do. (Aside: My addiction knows me better than I understand and know my media addiction. Therefore, isn't it wonderful to have a friend who knows and understands me far better than my addiction understands me?)

#### 11. Results.

We never know what swimming is like until we get down into the water and try. We will never know what this is like until we sincerely try it. Every person who has tried this honestly finds that a wisdom, not their own, comes into their minds and that a Power greater than human power begins to operate in their lives. It is an endless adventure.