

Adventurous Prayer
Session 5
TWO-WAY CONVERSATION

“Oh earth, earth, earth, Hear the word of the Lord!” Jeremiah 22:29

What is your favorite avenue of communication—one-on-one conversation, group chit-chat, telephone calls, letters, email? How do you like to keep in touch with those closest to you?

Listening in on a one-sided phone conversation can be so frustrating. Though we try to pick up cues and clues from the speaker we can see, our understanding is severely limited. Over the years, I have gotten good at putting together the pieces of my husband’s half-heard phone conversations. When he’s speaking to a woman, his tone of voice gets higher and gentler. When it’s a man on the other end of the line, there’s a more macho bass rumble to his replies. Certain references indicate a work-related call, others are a tell tale sign it’s a family member. A prolonged silence paired with a bored expression is a sure sign that he’s hooked up with a sales person. They talk so fast, without taking a breath, it’s hard to inform them you are uninterested in their product and still remain polite.

Too often our prayer lives become one sided. We do all the talking, but never pause to let God get a word in edgewise. We trundle on in a blithe monologue, but never pause to hear what God might have to say to us. Prayer isn’t supposed to be talking *to* God, but talking *with* God. As a conversation, a dialogue, it becomes necessary to stop speaking and listen.

1 There is a danger in doing all the talking when you pray. You aren’t allowing your Father to have any input in the conversation. Have you ever stopped to wonder—if you are not pausing to listen to God, then who are you listening to? John cautioned Christians to pay attention to whom they listen. What are our two choices according to **1 John 4: 5-6**?

2 So how does God “talk back” to us in our times of prayer? **Romans 8:15** hints at one way.

Barbara Johnson: *God is offering Himself to you at a generous exchange rate: His forgiveness for your sins. His joy for your grief. His love for your loneliness. You will grow rich as you spend time with Him, listening for His voice*

3 What is the primary way in which we hear the voice of God? **Romans 10:17** tells us clearly.

4 Proverbs 30:5 states “Every word of God is pure.” But can words written down centuries ago be relevant now? How can they be considered part of a conversation we’re having now?

Sheila Walsh: *When I first began to give myself to the discipline of solitude, I despaired of ever being able to quiet my mind. I would turn the radio or TV off and sit for a while. My mind would wander all over the place. I found myself thinking about what I would make for dinner. I was repeatedly discouraged, wanting to quit, reasoning that this was simply not the way for me to fellowship with God. But, I didn’t give up. I kept trying. After a while, I began to relax into being alone with God. I left all my lists and requests behind. This was time for quiet, not for petition.*

Prayer goes hand in hand with our daily Bible reading. God wants us to study His word, approaching our Bibles attentively—actively listening, seeking God’s words for us. Here we find the topic of our day’s conversation with Him.

This is called our “Quiet time” for a good reason. “Quiet,” because the noisy world we live in drowns out the Spirit’s promptings and the Savior’s call. We must learn to slow down, to settle ourselves so we can hear. And “time” because study, prayer, and worship all take time. Too often we exchange our daily bread for a daily crouton when it comes to Bible reading. Don’t rush through a chapter and verse so you can check it off your list and move on to the next thing. Don’t hurry past the words you know to be “living and powerful” and able to change you. Spend time with the word. Steep in it. Soak in it. Tell Him what you see. Ask Him how it pertains to your situation. Listen for God’s leading.

5 How does **1 Thessalonians 2:13** describe the Word of God?

6 Several of the writers of the Scriptures we now carry, mentioned why they committed the words of God to paper. What were their reasons according to these verses?

David in **Psalm 102:18**

John in **John 20:31**

Paul in **Romans 15:4**

John again in **John 5:13**

Thelma Wells: You can stop and listen to God every day, quiet your spirit before Him, and ask Him to communicate with you, But he requires your undivided attention. Psalm 46:10 tells us that we will know God and his sovereignty when we are, "still." Be still and know His will for you today.

7 When Joshua takes the leadership of God's people after Moses' death, God makes his expectations clear. According to **Joshua 1:8**, what does God expect Joshua to do with his "Bible"?

8 First Peter 1:23 says we have been born again "through the word of God which lives and abides forever". According to **Revelation 19:13**, how can we be very certain the word of God is eternal.

Thelma Wells: *When you need to make decisions and nobody on earth understands, call him up. When your problems seem unbearable, call him up. When you want to communicate with someone who wants to communicate with you, and who has all the answers to your questions, call him up.*

TRINKET TO TREASURE: At the close of each session, a gift will be placed in your hand to serve as a reminder of the things we have learned through scripture and our time together. It will be a small token to keep us from forgetting the faith journey we are traveling

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, we are well aware of our shortcomings when it comes to listening to you. We hurry to tell you what hangs heavy in our hearts but rarely pause to listen to your part of the conversation. Help us now and throughout the month to be more aware of our own failings. Help us to pause and listen for your voice and promptings so that our prayers become two way conversations where we not only talk *to* you, but *with* you. Amen