

God's Response

We have been talking about prayer and that it is communication with God. We are finishing this topic up this week as we talk about God's response to our prayers.

Introduction

Last time we talked about The Lord's prayer and shared that it is descriptive in nature. In other words, it is not meant to just recite. It is an example of how we can and should speak to God. If you missed that, we encourage you to go back and watch that video or read those notes. This time we are completing the topic on prayer by talking about how God responds to us when we pray.

God can respond to us in different ways. He speaks to us through scripture, through trusted brothers and sisters of the faith, through prophecy both in scripture and shared prophetically now, audibly, and directly in our heart through His small still voice.

Prayer is a two-way conversation between a believer and God. It is an exchange of thoughts, words, concerns, desires, plans, praises, and more. Let's talk about how God responds to us as we share and talk to Him.

God's Response Through Scripture

The first way we want to look at how God responds to us is through scripture or the Bible. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 addresses this. Let's read that.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

(16) All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, (17) so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

God will cause us to focus on certain passages of scripture at different times. He uses this to bring our attention to something He wants us to focus on. We present our plans and thoughts to the Lord in prayer and He will direct us through the Bible with answers sometimes.

We can read about similar situations we are facing or decisions we need to make. We can read how God responded to others in similar circumstances. In this, He is speaking to us. He is answering our prayers by continuing the conversation through scripture. Remember what Paul wrote to Timothy. All scripture is from God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. God responds to us through scripture.

God's Response Through Others in The Faith

The next way we want to focus on is when God responds to us through others. There are many instances in the Bible of God delivering His message to people through others. That's what all the books of the prophets basically are.

1 Samuel 13:13-14 tells of the prophet Samuel delivering God's message to King Saul after Saul took matters into his own hands. Israel was facing a battle with the Philistines and Saul was impatient to get into battle. He didn't want to wait for the man of God to come so he took matters into his own hands



and offered up a sacrifice to God. God clearly lets King Saul know what is going to happen next through Samuel. Let's read 1 Samuel 13:13-14.

1 Samuel 13:13-14

(13) "You have done a foolish thing," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. (14) But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command."

This happens today also. God can and does use brothers and sisters in the faith in your local group and pastors and other ministers to speak to us. When listening to someone else it is important to weigh what they say with scripture and even look for other confirmation about what you believe God is speaking to you.

God's Response Through Prophecy

Thirdly God responds to us through prophecy. It is right in line with the last two ways we spoke of but deserves its own mention.

As we said earlier, God speaks to us through scripture, and often that is through prophecies and the prophets we read in the Bible. These situations are frequently applicable to life today just as they were thousands of years ago.

God also speaks to us through modern prophecies. These can be words of knowledge through someone who would have no idea of your prayers or they can be part of a prophetic message given in plain language or in tongues with an interpretation while in a group gathering. Please understand any word of knowledge or prophecy spoken today will not contradict the Bible. If something spoken over you or in a prophetic manner in your group does not fall in line with scripture, it is false and is not from God. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

God's Response Audibly

God does respond audibly sometimes. We read often in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, that God spoke audibly to His people. One of the best places in scripture we read about hearing the audible voice of God is found in the gospels during Jesus' water baptism. Let's read Matthew 3:16-17.

Matthew 3:16-17

(16) As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. (17) And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

That voice from Heaven was the voice of God and everyone heard Him. There are times when God will speak audibly and only the person intended will hear Him. I personally can testify to this. I was at a church camp for college students in the summer of 1994 and during the altar time after one of the prayer meetings I heard a very distinctive booming voice say, "Brian, you are going to preach my Word to the nations." I heard it and I could feel it, yet my friend next to me heard nothing. I wrote it down on a note right then and gave it to my friend who was a youth pastor at the time. The last time we spoke he said he still had that note and here I am preaching to you today.



God's Response With A Still Small Voice

The final way God responds to us that we will talk about today is that small still voice in your heart. This is often the hardest to describe and discern but is most common after through scripture. Sometimes God responds while we wait to hear from Him in our prayers. If we tune out all the noise of the world and share our heart with Him sometimes He will respond with that small still voice. We can read about this in 1 Kings 19:11-13.

Elijah was running for his life after defeating the prophets of Baal. King Ahab wanted to kill him. Finally, after running for days he was hiding in a cave in the mountains and this is what happened.

1 Kings 19:11-13

(11) The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. (12) After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. (13) When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

God spoke to Elijah in that small still voice right in his heart. This is frequently how God responds to us. He is not in the big show. We have to block out the noise and distractions of the world so we can discern and hear the small still voice of God.

Conclusion

When we pray we can expect God to respond. Sometimes it is audible and other times not. Sometimes it is through something we subsequently read in the Bible and other times it is through a brother or sister in the Lord. However He responds, He will.

Prayer is a two-way conversation with God. Jesus introduces us to God the Father and we don't need to be afraid of what He has to say to us. God loves us. He loves us so much He sent Jesus to save us. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide you to God and counsel you as you hear from God.

