



## *Seeking Guidance*

*Session 7 – 15<sup>th</sup> April 2018*

### *Bible Readings*

Psalm 121; Luke 21: 12-15; Luke 12: 11-12

And Matt 6: 25-34; Gen 28: 10-22; Ex 4: 10-17; 1 Cor 2: 10-16; 1 Sam 3;

### *Sermon Notes*

Jesus is the Good Shepherd: “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.” (John 10). If we listen we will hear and recognise God’s voice.

Many bible characters hear God clearly speaking into their lives, and many of our fellow church members assert that God has spoken to them in various ways: a voice; the bible; circumstances; feelings.

If we are to have a relationship with God that is in any sense personal and transformational, let’s expect to find God’s “leadings” or “promptings” from the Holy Spirit; that still, small voice.

George Bernard Shaw writes: “God’s voice speaks to you all the time - You just fail to listen.” Do we have Spiritual Mindlessness? Are we like Jacob “*Surely the LORD is in this place and I was not aware of it.*” But Jacob made a **pillar** to remind him how he needed to listen to God.

To develop Spiritual Mindfulness – just be practical - a post-it on our dashboard; an alarm on our phone, an act of listening every time we boil the kettle, a physical object on our desk, to remind us that this

very moment might be “our gateway to heaven.” Because God works with a wide pallet. C. S. Lewis suggests that God may be speaking to us “affecting our consciousness,” without our being aware initially.

Whilst we might all want to consult God over those big decisions about money; happiness; success - the real test of our Spiritual mindfulness is how we seek God when we’re not facing trouble or a big decision.

Think how we parent our children. If we took every decision for them how would they become mature, healthy, responsible, and decisive adults. Instead we develop their character so that they instinctively make good decisions.

Is it possible that God’s purpose in guidance is not primarily to get us to perform the right actions, but to help us become the right kind of people – to seek guidance for the growth of our soul; asking questions like: How do I become a more truthful person? Who can teach me to pray in a way that will nourish my soul? What practices will enable me to live in joy continually? What book / podcast should I read this month to develop my spiritual authenticity?

Thomas Kelly says “*There is a way of ordering our mental life on more than one level at once.*” One level we are thinking, discussing, seeing, calculating, but deep within, at a profounder level, we are gently receptive to divine breathings. This can be practiced. Before a significant decision - we stop and ask for wisdom. If we have some down time unexpectedly – pause and ask God, “Do you have anything for me to do?” Each time we greet someone we can inwardly ask the Spirit, “How can I represent you to this person?” Look out for insight in the words of people whose faith you respect, whose lives demonstrate the depth of their faith.

All this only makes sense in the context of lives committed to “seeking first the kingdom of God.” Which is what this series is all about. Accept the possibility that sometimes God may want to get in a word or two with you. Let’s try it!

### *Key Quotes*

“There is a way of ordering our mental life on more than one level at once. On one level we may be thinking, discussing, seeing, calculating, meeting all the demands of external affairs. But deep within, behind the scenes, at a profounder level, we may also be in prayer and adoration, song and worship and a gentle receptiveness to divine breathings.” THOMAS KELLY

“In our day heaven and earth are on tiptoe waiting for the emerging of a Spirit-led, Spirit-intoxicated, Spirit-empowered people - who know the life and power of the kingdom of God. It has happened before. It can happen again....” RICHARD FOSTER

### *Discussion Questions*

**Read Thomas Kelly’s quote.** Describe a time, maybe a brief moment, when you experienced this ability to live on two levels at once.

What are some of the things that can get in the way of this kind of ongoing awareness of God’s presence and closeness?

What have you discovered that has helped you grow in your awareness of your life in God, even in the midst of your daily responsibilities?

**Read: Psalm 121.** Take a few minutes and write down what you think God sees and thinks when he looks at you while you are sleeping.

What can you learn about your perspective on the heart of God for his children?

**Read: John 10:1–4.** What does this passage teach you about God as our shepherd? What does it teach about us as his sheep? How do you hear the Good Shepherd’s voice and receive his leading in your life.

**Read: 1 Samuel 3:1–10** Tell about a time when God was speaking to you and trying to get your attention, but it took a long time for you to tune in and realize God was seeking to move you. What finally got your attention and helped you recognize that God was speaking to you?

What are some modern day “pillars” we can set up, like Jacob, to help remind us to be attentive to God and ready to hear his Spirit speak?

Tell about a time you heard God speak to you through the words of another person. How did you respond to this leading or prompting?

### *Prayer*

Take time to thank God for the many ways he speaks through his Word, through others, through his creation, through life circumstances, and through the still small voice of his Spirit.

Pray and ask for the ability to recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd with greater and greater clarity.

### *Personal Reflection*

What are some of the things that get in the way of you being attentive to God? What can you do to remove some of these roadblocks in the coming week? What practices, habits, or disciplines have you learned that have helped you grow in attentiveness to God?

### *Blog, Vlog and Social Media*

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