

Listening Prayer: Ask Jesus to reveal to you if there is any judgement in your heart towards others or even towards yourself for the progress made in walking with Christ. Confess as necessary. Then, write a prayer to Jesus telling Him how you are willing to give yourself and others room to grow.

God expects our best effort. This means that I make every effort to turn from all known areas of sin. And, I give every effort on any other steps that God gives me. God is asking for your best. He is not asking you to go from B to H overnight. When you give Him your best effort He is pleased with you, even if our best is accompanied by a mess.

2 Peter 3:14 NIV

So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him.

Personal Reflection: Everyone has struggles as no one is perfect. Think about a struggle that you are currently facing. Write it down.

Commitment: Will you give God your best effort, doing whatever it takes to get free? Will you continue to try, even if you have failed in the past?

Listening Prayer: Ask Jesus to speak to you about steps you can take to continue making forward progress in your walk with Him. For example, confession, accountability, Encounter Freedom Retreat, personal ministry, reading the Word, prayer, obedience, etc.

Philippians 3:20-21 ESV

But our citizenship is in heaven and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself.

Prayer: Giving your best effort means following through on what He shows you. When you do this you can be sure that God will complete the process, to actually save you and make you holy and blameless. Write a prayer to God committing to doing your best on whatever He has shown you, then thank Him that He will complete the process inside of you.



LEARNING TO RECOGNIZE GOD'S VOICE

When God Goes Quiet

Jeremy & Lisa Peters

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Reasons we might not hear God...

1. Deliberate and Unrepentant _____

Psalm 66:18 NLT

"If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened."

Dallas Willard:

"Anyone who rejects the general counsels of Scripture is in fact planning not to be guided by God and cannot then rely on being able to be delivered from their difficulties by obtaining God's input on particular occasions."

2. Spiritual _____

Daniel 10:12-14 NLT

*"Then he said, "Don't be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer. **But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way.** Then Michael, one of the archangels, came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia. Now I am here to explain what will happen to your people in the future, for this vision concerns a time yet to come."*

3. More _____ is Required

4. We Choose Not to _____

Joshua 9:14-16 NLT

"So, the Israelites examined their food, **but they did not consult the Lord.** Then Joshua made a peace treaty with them and guaranteed their safety, and the leaders of the community ratified their agreement with a binding oath. Three days after making the treaty, they learned that these people actually lived nearby!"

5. The Question is _____ or Presumptuous

6. God is Giving us _____ to Choose

Dallas Willard

"In general, it is God's will that we ourselves should have a great part in determining our path through life.... God both develops and, for our good, tests our character by leaving us to decide. He calls us to responsible citizenship in his kingdom by saying – in effect or in reality – as often as possible, "My will for you in this case is that you decide on your own."

Apprenticeship Prayer Partner Questions:

- 1) Have you ever experienced God "go silent" with you? How did it make you feel? How did you handle it? What did you learn through the journey?
- 2) Repeatedly in this series, we have returned to the truth that Tuning In to hear God's voice happens in the context of relationship. How are you seeking to intentionally cultivate your relationship with God? What habits are you seeking to form to nurture your relationship with Him?
- 3) If the most important thing about us is who we are becoming, what are some ways that God is seeking to form your character in this season? How are you responding to Him?

Hearing God Practice

Ephesians 3:16-17 NLT

I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources He will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.

Thanksgiving: Ask Jesus to show you an area where you have given Him your best, even if it's not perfect yet. Then, ask Him to speak to you about how He sees you through the process of moving and making progress in this area. Give thanks to God for His Father's heart of mercy and love as we struggle through the process.

The moment that you accept Jesus you begin on a journey of following Christ. Each of us begins our journey at a different spot on the line of life because of varying factors such as: personal history, family history, gifting and ability, etc. What God looks for on our journey is forward progress. We are all people in process; God expects each of us to move forward. If someone starts at B, the next step is to move to C. Another person starts at K, and their next step is to get to L. God is no more pleased with a person who moves forward from K to L as he is with a person who moves from B to C, despite the fact that the person at C is way closer to imperfection than the person at L.

Imperfection _____ Perfection
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Personal Reflection: Have you ever felt guilty about where you are in your walk with God? Do you struggle with comparing yourself to others who are further along in their walk with God than you are? How easily do you accept that you are in progress and that walking with God is a process?

Philippians 3:12-14 ESV

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God In Christ Jesus.

It is critical that we don't judge others because we have no idea where they are coming from and where they are on the journey. We may look down on someone for being at zero, but if they started at A then they have moved forward three steps already. Whereas the next person may be at N, and that's exactly where they started years ago. Which person actually moved further? As we move along in the journey and as we grow closer to God our understanding and awareness of sin grows with us. This is why we must give ourselves and others room to grow.