

A Recent Article by James Goll which I hope will encourage you.

God has an encouraging word for us: *No more boxes!* God does not live in a box. He did at one time, but ever since he broke out of the Ark of the Covenant, he has never lived in a box again. Of course, you and I tend to live in boxes that are often fairly nice, although cramped. They're neat but stuffy, old, and stale. If God no longer lives in a box, then let's follow suit, and let's live outside of the box too! *He wants to lift the lid over our heads so that we can experience his voice in an on-going basis. Let's breathe in God's refreshing Word and renew our hearts and souls so that we will walk in a new level of his divine creativity.*



“God Confirms His Word: God wants us to hear his voice, discern it from other voices, and then, through the spirit of wisdom and revelation, correctly interpret and apply the word he has spoken to us. God has said that *Every word may be verified by the testimony of two or three witnesses*” (Matthew 18:16 TPT). For emphasis, we find this statement, or a variation, two more times in Scripture: in Deuteronomy 19:15 and in 2 Corinthians 13:1.

Evidently, God does not want us to know only the historical Jesus, who came in human form and walked among men. He greatly yearns that we would also know the living, resurrected Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Father wants to enable us to hear, know, and obey the risen Lord. But often we don't realize that he is speaking to us. No wonder we miss his cues. He is such a multifaceted Creator, endlessly creative in how he chooses to communicate.

God's Multifaceted Voice: Our Father's voice comes to us in such a great variety of ways that we need such moments of enlightenment. Otherwise, we tend to get locked into set patterns. It's so good of God to temporarily shut down one channel in order to open another.

He hasn't quit speaking; he is opening our hearts and minds to hear his voice in new ways. He does this so that we will continue to grow progressively in our relationship with him. He doesn't want us to become locked into the same patterns of hearing him. God's goal is a real, living relationship with us.

To tell the truth, he likes messing with our radio dial! Sometimes he turns the volume louder and then back down, thus creating a greater dependency on him. He loves to roll the dial to different stations to help us learn to appreciate the diversity within the Body of Christ. After we have logged a few more listening hours, we are much less frustrated with who controls the knobs. Eventually, we learn to love the wide variety of ways in which he speaks.

Here are a few scriptural examples, which portray the out-of-the-box ways in which the Spirit speaks to people:

A dream or vision (see Job 33:14–18)

A voice in a trance (see Acts 10:9–16)

The voice of many angels (see Revelation 5:11)

The voice of the archangel (see 1 Thessalonians 4:16)

The sound of many waters (Revelation 1:15)

The sound of the Lord walking in the Garden (see Genesis 3:8)

The sound of the army of God marching in the tops of the trees (see 2 Samuel 5:23–25)

The audible voice of God (see Exodus 3:4)

God “speaking peace” to his people (Psalm 85:8)

God's written Word (our primary source of his voice and our chief reference point) (see Psalm 119:105) Wonders in the sky and on earth (see Joel 2:30–31)

Visions and parables to the prophets (see Hosea 12:10)

Words and physical metaphors to the prophets (see Jeremiah 18:1–6)

The Holy Spirit speaking to a group (see Acts 13:2)

Men, moved by the Holy Spirit, declaring God's voice (see 2 Peter 1:21)

Heavenly experiences in which one is brought up before the Lord (see 2 Corinthians 12:1–4)

The Holy Spirit bearing witness to our spirit (see Romans 8:16)
A dumb donkey speaking with the voice of a man (see 2 Peter 2:16)
One person speaking the revelatory counsel of the Lord to another (see James 5:19–20)
God’s own Son (see Hebrews 1:2)

This list is not exhaustive, but it gives a bird’s-eye view of some of the ways God has chosen to speak to (and through) his people. I have been surprised over the years both at how God speaks and what or whom he chooses to use as his voice! Sometimes the package is not one that I would prefer. *But he is God—and that means he has the right to pick what he wants to say, how to say it, and what or whom to use*

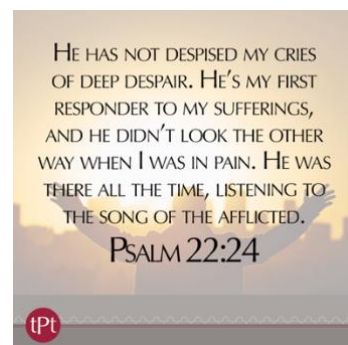


God Knows My Number: God is not limited in his attention-getting techniques. He wants us to hear him, and he has plenty of approaches he can utilize.

Once the voice of God came to me in the middle of the night, but I didn’t recognize it at first. The ringing of my telephone woke me up. I got up out of bed, went to our kitchen, and picked up the phone only to find there was no one on the other end—just a dial tone. I stumbled back into bed and fell asleep, but soon the phone began ringing a second time. I rolled out of bed, groped in the dark, and picked up the phone, but again, there was no voice on the other end.

Wearily, I walked back once more to my bedroom and crawled into bed. A third time I woke up to the sound of our telephone ringing. Determined to figure this thing out, I went to the kitchen, picked up the receiver, and listened longer. I still didn’t hear anything. But this time, a still, small voice in my heart whispered, Jeremiah 33:3.

I hung up the receiver, found a Bible, and looked up the verse: “*Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.*” I was stunned by his invitation, and I spent the next couple of hours just sitting in the quietness of our living room in the presence of the Almighty, communing with him and listening to his sweet, sweet voice. God does still call occasionally...



Now folks, that was a genuine God encounter, a personal and perhaps an unusual way for him to demonstrate how he takes the initiative to deepen our relationship with him. He caused the sound

of a telephone to awaken me from my sleep. He persisted until he got my full attention. He took me to his written Word. The Holy Spirit illuminated his Word and used it to draw me closer to his very bosom.

Yes, after he got my attention, I called upon the Lord, and he did show me great and mighty things that I did not previously know. And this activity has never stopped. God loves to show up and show off! **The End Result:** He wants us to hear his voice in all of its manifestations so that we can bear much fruit—fruit that will remain. In our process of becoming, we must not forget that ultimately, this is not about us. It is about God transforming us into the beautiful image of his glorious Son, Jesus. By the power of the voice of our personal tutor, the Holy Spirit, you and I will be changed into the image of God’s Son. According to Psalm 29, we will shout praises together as we are changed from glory to glory. Everything in his temple says, “**Glory!**”

Let his voice thunder. Let the fire fall. Let his word be magnified. Let all creation echo his sound. Let his piercing voice continue to proceed. You and I do not live by bread alone but by the ever-proceeding Word of our Father. Yes, God no longer lives in a box—so why do we? (*By James Goll*)

The Cave of Adullam – The Cave of Despair or the Cave of Strength?

It may only be three weeks but for most of us the times when we could walk outside our front doors with no restrictions, see family and friends and be together on Sundays to worship may be beginning to feel like a distance memory. Once we felt that nothing could get in our way, now we are living our lives, for the time being, very differently.

Maybe we feel a little like King David who once had everything, anointed by Samuel to be King of Israel, defeated Goliath, promoted from shepherd to court musician to warrior. But then Saul gets jealous. The next thing he knows David is out of a job, loses everything and fleeing for his life ends up in a cave! The cave of Adullam or in David's eyes the Cave of Despair. The cave where at some point we too may end up when all our props, supports and crutches get stripped away. I am not saying that you are in that cave right now but maybe some of us feel like it.

Unfortunately, nobody plans on ending up in such a cave but at some point in our lives we have been or will be there. The hardest thing about being in the cave is that you then begin to wonder whether God has lost track of you. Has he forgotten his promises? Does he remember where I am? Will I ever get out of this cave?

But, do you know what *God does some of his best work in caves!* David spent ten years of his life in the wilderness on the run, probably wondering if any of God's promises to him would ever come true.

"But David found strength in the Lord his God". (1 Samuel 30:6)

This is the great secret, when every other resource has gone, when every prop is removed, every crutch taken away, when we feel we have reached the end of our tether, like David, we need to encourage ourselves in the Lord. In the cave David says to God *"You are my refuge"* (Psalm 142:5). We know what is in store for David but at the time he didn't. For all he knew the cave was as good as it was going to get. But he made a discovery. God was his refuge. All he could do was trust God and as we immerse ourselves in God's presence, like David we are convinced of God's goodness and find that the cave is a safe place to be because God is there with us. *We often learn the best things about God when we are in a cave.*

And God really does know about caves because of what Jesus did for us. The Son of David understood even more. He also lost his position, his status as a teacher, his safety and security. He lost all his friends despite his teachings and warnings. His life, too, was endangered and then it got really bad. He went to the cross and died. All his dreams, and all the dreams he inspired appeared to die with him. And then the authorities put his body in a cave. BIG mistake! His body was there for three days. But it did not stay there. *They forgot God does some of his best work in caves.* The cave is where God resurrects dead things.

I don't know if any of you feel like you are in a cave right now. Maybe not, maybe you have never been but at some point, you will be. Sooner or later we will all spend time in the cave and when your time comes, just remember one thing: ***God does some of his best work in caves. (Felicity Parry)***

