

RECOGNISING GOD'S VOICE

God always gives you what you need, when you need it, if you're listening. Sometimes God will tell me something and I'm either not listening properly or I don't realize it's God until afterwards and then I'm like "Oh ok, that was God." The key is to know God's voice, and to be listening.

We were having some medical issues going on with our youngest son Noah. I was pretty scared and freaked out and very stressed but trying to hold it all together in front of other people, especially our older son Isiah as I didn't want to scare him. It was my birthday and my sister had bought me Robin McGraw's book *'Inside my Heart.'* I was just flicking through it before going to bed and I read how her son Jay was going in for an operation when he was just a young baby. She wrote of how she prayed and gave her baby up to God and how scared she was but what a peace she felt and how a burden was lifted from her shoulders. She was describing exactly how I was feeling and it really spoke to me and gave me what I needed at that exact time.

Was it coincidence that I opened the book to that page? Absolutely not! God was speaking to me and lifting me up right when I needed it. God is always

always there when you need Him. Reading that page and later the whole book (in two days, it was so good I couldn't put it down) really gave me the confidence and peace to pray the prayers I needed to pray and gave me the peace to relax in the prayers I had already given to God.

I love to read, so that is often how God speaks to me. My husband has a great collection of John C. Maxwell books which I am making my way through. I also have quite a few books written by Christian women some of which have brought me to my knees to pray or to tears. One such book (given to me by my husband) is *'The Colours of His Love'* by Kathy Troccoli and Dee Brestin. The first time I read this book I cried all the way through. The second time I still cried but not as much. By the third time I didn't cry but I did still get a whole lot out of it, just different stuff from the first time. I like to re-read great books. Different things speak to me at different times as obviously how I am feeling and the situation I am in has changed.

Another book that impacted me greatly was Darlene Zschech's book *'The Kiss of Heaven.'* Now there is a little bit of history behind this one so let me tell you the story.

Cameron and I had gone to Auckland for the 'Pursuit

of Excellence' conference. I was pretty sure I was pregnant but didn't know for certain as I would have only been a week or two. I was fairly confident that I was as we were trying, and I was pretty sure about dates as any woman who has tried for a baby will understand. Darlene Zschech was at the conference and had her book for sale there also. I bought it and started reading it once I got back home. She talks a lot about the favor of God and your life's dreams and desires.

The night we got back from conference, Cameron wanted to get a newspaper to catch up on the news plus we needed milk, he was going down the road to the petrol station to get them. Me, being a typical slightly impatient female needing to know the answer, talked him into going to the supermarket instead so he could get a pregnancy test also. Thankfully I have a very thoughtful loving husband who did as I asked (with only a little protest) and went to the supermarket, got the milk, paper and a pregnancy test.... I have often wondered what the checkout lady was thinking as she served him! It is a rather strange combination!!

Anyway it was a positive test so we were very excited. At around six weeks pregnant I started to bleed (this had not happened at any time with my previous pregnancy) and I was really scared. Cameron prayed with me and then I got out Darlene's book and was

reading where she shares briefly about her personal loss which she writes about in more detail in one of her other books *'Extravagant Worship.'* I got this out and re-read that part of her book again (pg 36). It is very moving, encouraging, and inspirational.

She shows how to **'put the Word of God above anything we could be humanly facing.'** I looked up some scriptures and really stood on the Word of God.

I also listened to a Jackie Mize tape on supernatural childbirth. She shares testimonies of women who have successfully carried babies to term after having a miscarriage scare. She also shares a lot of great scriptures which I read and prayed for myself and our baby.

One I found particularly encouraging was **Malachi 3:11**. It says "*[Your] vine wont caste it's fruit before it's time*" (miscarriage). If you are a faithful tither you can stand on that Word. Other good scriptures are **Psalm 113:9** – "*joyful mother of children.*" **Psalm 127:3** – "*fruit of the womb, happy is the man who has his quiver full of them.*" (My husband should be real happy with 5 children!). **Psalm 128:3** – "*fruitful vine.*" **Exodus 23:26** – "*no barrenness.*"

I read these scriptures, prayed and literally stood on the Word of God. I know that seems silly but I did. I opened my Bible to Malachi 3 and put it on the floor,

stood on it and prayed. I know this is not what people mean when they say to stand on the Word of God but it is what I felt to do so I obeyed and did it. The bleeding stopped the next day and I never bled again through my pregnancy. I now have a beautiful son named Noah Zachariah Lock. Noah means 'quiet resting place' and Zachariah means 'God has remembered.' What a blessing.

I really appreciate women like Darlene and Robin who share their personal experiences. Reading their books helped me so much in the times I really needed some encouragement and faith. It must have been a really emotional thing to do but they were obedient to God and shared their hearts. They will probably never know how many women's lives they have touched and encouraged by sharing their stories but I bet it runs into the tens of thousands world wide. Thank you to those women who have had the strength to share their personal lives with others.

Now I will share Noah's story.

When Noah was born we noticed that the left side of his face and down his neck was all swollen. We asked the midwife about it and she said she didn't think it was too much to worry about, probably just swelling from being born because he was born very fast (seven

minutes). At every visit we had with the midwife, she would check the swelling and because it was going down she wasn't too worried about it (neither was I really). Cameron however wasn't happy about it. Our midwife said if we were worried about him, she would refer us to a specialist. So because Noah's face was still swollen after quite a few weeks (the swelling had gone down but not away altogether) we decided to ask the midwife to refer us to somebody who could check it out for us. She was really good and listened to us and took our concerns on board, and so we were referred to the paediatricians at our local hospital. Sometimes you can feel like people in the medical field just don't listen to you or think you are being neurotic but our midwife really listened to us and I am grateful that she did. We went to the paediatrician and they ordered a scan for Noah. The scan was not all that pleasant for him but it was the easiest way for them to see what was going on. He was later diagnosed with Cystic Hygroma (CH).

We had never heard of this and neither had our midwife so we googled it on the internet and what we found out was pretty scary for me. While the paediatrician had explained it to us, we still didn't really understand what it was. I couldn't really take a lot in when he was talking to us because it all sounded pretty scary. I had lots of questions afterwards but couldn't

think of any at the time. I think I was just freaking out that there was something really wrong with my baby.

When we got home and looked it up on the internet, some of the information and photos we saw made me physically sick. This is the night that I opened Robin's book to where she was talking about their experience with Jay when he was a baby and how she coped.

I felt so totally overwhelmed but the more I thought about it and read information about Cystic Hygroma I actually realised how blessed Cameron and I are to have Noah. He has a very minor CH with a very real possibility of it resolving itself. We don't know when he got CH or why. I had a really normal pregnancy and took all the vitamins I should have and looked after myself really well. According to statistics depending on when in the pregnancy the CH developed, the foetus has a 2-9% chance for a good outcome!!

A whole lot of prayer went into Noah before he was conceived, while I was pregnant and everyday since he was born. Noah is a real blessing and we can see where God has worked in his life already. He is an absolute delight and we love him very much.

This is what some web sites say about Cystic Hygroma.
(Individual websites referenced at back of book)

A Cystic Hygroma is a birth defect, it is a very rare condition occurring in perhaps one in 10,000 births. It occurs as the baby grows in the womb from pieces of material that carries fluid and white blood cells (embryonic lymphatic tissue).

Cystic Hygromas are fluid-filled sacs that result from a blockage in the lymphatic system. The lymphatic system is a network of vessels that maintain fluid in the blood, as well as transporting fats and immune system cells. They are single or multiple cysts found mostly in the neck region and are a soft swelling, usually resembling a bunch of small white grapes. The swelling can become very large, quite unsightly and very disturbing to parents of the affected child. Large cysts present at birth may necessitate a tracheotomy if there is pressure on the airway, though this is rare.

A CH can be present as a birth defect or develop any time during a person's life. In a developing baby it can progress to hydrops (an excess amount of fluid in the body) and eventually foetal death. When diagnosed prenatally the overall prognosis is poor.

Cystic Hygromas diagnosed after birth are usually associated with a good prognosis. Infants with persistent Cystic Hygroma must be monitored for airway obstruction. A thin needle may be used to reduce the volume of the Cystic Hygroma to prevent facial

deformities and airway obstruction. They can also be surgically removed.

Small cysts may not require any specific treatment except to wait and see how they develop. The cysts are usually slow-growing and may spontaneously resolve or reduce in size. (Because Noah's has become smaller we are believing that his will resolve itself and he won't need any other treatment).

Treatment involves complete removal of the abnormal tissue whenever possible. However Cystic Hygromas can often invade other neck structures, making this impossible. In other cases, other treatments have been attempted with only limited success. These include injection of sclerosing agents, steroids, chemotherapy agents and radiation therapy.

The outlook is good if surgery can totally remove the abnormal tissue. In cases where complete removal is not possible because of involvement of neighbouring nerves or blood vessels, recurrence is common. This cystic swelling is usually allowed, when possible to grow with the child and then it is removed surgically when the child is about five years old.

We had to see a specialist from Starship Children's Hospital in Auckland who would tell us the best course of action for Noah. He could get the needle option where they drain the fluid out or have it surgically removed or

leave it, but we need to know the pros and cons for each course of action.

In preparation for our appointment with the specialist I read lots of web sites so I could be fully prepared to understand what the specialist had to say. I have seen some really gross photos of infants with really huge Cystic Hygromas and my heart goes out to them and their parents.

Noah has such a minor case that most of the time his is hardly noticeable and people don't even notice it, they just think he has a chubby face and neck. I do still find it upsetting to read and see this information but it also makes me feel reassured that Noah has a very good prognosis compared to some other children.

I sometimes wondered if I should read all this information and at first I couldn't without feeling physically sick. By the time Noah was six months old his neck was more often than not smaller rather than getting bigger, so I was able to read the sites without feeling ill. I think as parents we need to have all the information available to us so we can make the best most informed decisions for our children that we can. We still need to listen to the specialists and the doctors but it is more reassuring when you can understand what they are talking about.

I take my role as a parent very seriously and I will do everything in my power to do the best for my children. God is bigger than me though obviously and we believe He can heal Noah completely so that he won't have any on going problems and the Cystic Hygroma will resolve itself and not reoccur.

Big test of our faith. (I share the rest of Noah's story in Noah's chapter of this book).

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block out every
other negative
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I have really had to plug-in to God, block out every other negative voice and listen to that 'still small voice' of God.

As I said earlier you really do have to learn to recognise God's voice and when He is speaking to you. Take the time to spend quality time getting to know Him and how He speaks to you. It doesn't have to be a 'still small voice,' sometimes it can be a passage of scripture that really jumps out at you or a section from a book like it often is for me. Words of wisdom and encouragement from trusted friends and family or just your so-called 'intuition' kicking in. You will know when it happens that God is speaking to you.

I have had to learn to recognise God's voice and it is a very valuable skill to learn as it takes away a lot of doubt and indecision from situations and decisions that need to be made. Cameron and I don't always hear from God in

the same way but we both get the same answer so we know and have confirmation together as a couple in knowing we have heard from God. I want to encourage you to take the time and make the effort to hear God for yourself and recognise He is talking to you first time around. God truly does love talking to His children.

John 10:4 - *“...He goes before them; and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice.”*

If you want to follow Jesus and go where He wants you to go, then you really need to *know His voice*.

Psalms 95:7 - *“For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice...”*

Revelation 3:20 - *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock, If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him...”*

Personally I don't want to leave Jesus knocking. I want to hear His voice and meet with Him. I want to follow Jesus and go where He wants to take me.

Learn to recognise God's voice. He has such an awesome journey to take us on. Don't miss out because you were too busy being busy, slow down and really take the time to listen. I want to encourage you to do that

today... don't put it off! God can talk to you in many different ways, you need to learn to recognise when He is speaking to you.

One day when I was going for a walk with Noah in the pushchair, I looked over to our beautiful Mt Taranaki, it was covered in cloud and there was this tiny piece of rainbow visible. Cameron and I had been stressing out about some issues we were facing and I felt like God spoke to me that day just through what I was looking at.

Trust in God's promises, have faith and most of all learn to recognise when God is talking to you.

I felt like God was telling me that His promises are real. The rainbow is a promise from God that He will never flood the earth again. It was like He was telling me to have faith, even just a little bit like the little piece of rainbow I could see. If Cameron and I could just have even a little bit of faith that God has it all in control and His promises are real, to just hang in there and trust Him, then we will get the breakthrough in our situation that we needed.

Trust in God's promises, have faith and most of all learn to recognise when God is talking to you.

God has something He wants to tell you today!