

A person wearing a grey knit hat and a dark scarf with a fur-lined hood is seen from behind, looking up at a forest. Sunlight streams through the trees, creating a bright, ethereal atmosphere. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

Hearing from God

Leaders copy

Strength⁺
dignity WOMEN
WITH PURPOSE

LESSON SIX: Zoey Penwarden

Hearing from God

(Introduce yourself and the evening's topic)

(Read aloud) **Number one:** Believe – He wants to speak to you.

John 10: 27 – (Jesus says) *“my sheep hear my voice; I know them and they follow me.”*

In this one powerful line of scripture Jesus is saying that as a result of our relationship with Him that we should EXPECT and ANTICIPATE to hear the voice of God. That makes me jump inside with excitement. God CAN talk to me, He is WILLING and He really wants to speak to us personally. He actually gave it all to have a personal relationship with us. God wants more than anything to be in close proximity with you. Why wouldn't we want to live each day with the capacity, power and protection we can get?

Every moment and in every season God is inviting us to go deeper with Him. He invites us to meet with Him and speak with Him, where His spirit can speak afresh to us. In the stillness we surrender to His Majesty, all else falls away... busyness, distractions, complacency, neglect, as He advances us into the next level with Him. What He has to offer us is more than religion or rituals but an opportunity to live a life with purpose. Where we can actually hear His voice and be led by the Spirit into alignment with His Will.

(Read the following scriptures then discuss in groups what these scriptures reveal about the character of God. The word character means: moral qualities distinctive to an individual, some synonyms are personality, nature or temperament. How does the character of God show through in these scriptures?)

John 14:21 – *“Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”*

Psalms 15:14 – *“The Lord confides in those who fear Him; He makes His covenant known to them.”*

Q What can we learn about the character of God from these scriptures?

(Lead a group discussion around the following questions. We have a role to play, we need to position ourselves correctly to hear from God, discuss some different ways we can do this).

Q What impact does this have for us as believers? What is our role? How do we position ourselves to hear from Him?

(Read aloud).

Hopefully it is becoming clear that God wants to be close to us and reveal himself to us. Could our willingness to be obedient to what God says and being able to surrender ourselves to Him, have an impact on how we hear God.

(Introduce Zoey, Zoey Penwarden is an enthusiastic encourager, worshiper and leader at Park City Church in New Plymouth. Zoey has a *dream* to see ALL women empowered and equipped to fulfill their unique calling, and lead a passionate life for Jesus, with purpose. Born in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, Zoey along with her husband Simon and two sons have been living in New Zealand for 11 years. By day an intermediate school teacher... and at all times just-a-girl who loves Jesus!

(Watch Av Clip “Hearing from God” 4.38mins and encourage ladies to take notes on anything that stands out to them, then discuss afterwards).

(Read aloud) **Number Two:** Reading the Word of God - His Love letter to us

The Bible is the voice of God, breathed for us in pages of words that come ALIVE in the heart, mind and soul of all who believe.

We have to know God to hear His voice.

As we read the word and meditate on His words we let the Holy Spirit reveal truth to us. We can learn about the character and personality of God. We get to understand what He would say, and what He wouldn't say. The Holy Spirit who is with us, is the one who whispers to our soul, and He can only say what is from God and in alignment with His Word.



John 16:13-15 – *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”*

So how do we do this? Well, from my experience this is the best journey you will ever go on. Yes a journey, and guess what, we don't get it right all the time, but knowing **Him**, this side of Heaven is totally worth it. We need to be **PURPOSEFUL** in reading the Bible and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and teach us. To shift our preconceived ideas, renew our minds and lift our hearts towards Jesus.

(Watch clip from Priscilla Shirer to give some practical advice on how to hear Gods voice).

Priscilla Shirer has some practical advice for us on how to hear God's voice, when we are reading His word. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eebVvt5RkU>

(Discuss anything that stands out from Priscilla's advice).

(Read aloud) **Number Three:** Practising stillness

Psalms 46:10 - *“Be still, and know that I am God...”*

If stillness is a new spiritual discipline for you, it may be uncomfortable at first. Our minds and bodies are made for doing, so the flesh rails against the idea of being still before God. So start small, maybe 2 minutes a day, then five, ten and so on. Eventually stillness and listening to God will become an important part of how you connect with Him each day.

(Read the following questions and discuss as a group, stillness can be a hard discipline to master in our busy lives so encourage the ladies to just start somewhere).

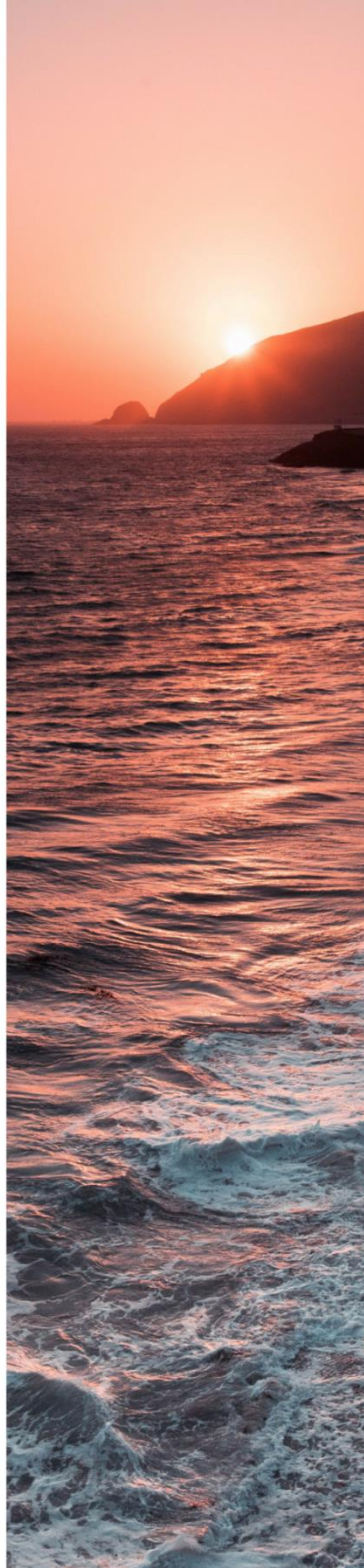
- Q** What are your initial thoughts of stillness and silence as a discipline to practise?

- Q** What can you do to intentionally practice stillness?



*Listen in
silence
because if
your heart
is full
of other
things you
cannot
hear the
voice of
God*

Mother Teresa



(Read aloud) It takes an intentional effort to shift our focus from our surroundings and be still.

(Encourage the ladies to do the following activity).

Take a look at the reasons below that impact our time with God and being able to hear from Him.

(Circle the ones that relate to you personally).

- fear • doubt • it's too hard • stubbornness
- pride • lack of time, business • find it hard to trust in God • unsure how to start • don't want to step out of my comfort zone • lack of patience with God's timing • feel like God wouldn't listen anyway
- lack of confidence • not sure you are 'really' hearing from God • disappointment because of previous experiences • wonder if it is all really worth it in the long run.

Are there any more reasons you can think of or have experienced? Write them here.

Choose one or two of the above reasons you circled, and describe how it may affect your relationship with God and being able to hear His voice. **(If you like, share some of your answers with your group).**

(Highlight the importance of spending time with God and allowing that space for Him to speak to us in return).

God wants to talk to you. He gave ALL to have a personal relationship with you. He is the same God,

but we can all encounter Him in different way. Zoey has shared some of the ways she personally connects with God; no doubt you have similar disciplines you have developed in your journey. The overall message is that God wants to talk to you and have a one on one relationship with you. Take the time to hear His voice and connect with God in your every day.

(Encourage the group to take a look at the extra study and website which is updated each month www.strengthanddignity.co.nz

Wrap up lesson six and give details for the time and date of the next Strength and dignity – Women with Purpose session).



Extra Study –Zoey Penwarden

“Our spiritual ear will never be sensitive to His voice if we have a personal agenda to which we are already committed. God leads and speaks to the humble who have surrendered their plans and want to do His will. With an ‘open heaven’ and a surrendered will, we will be able to clearly hear God’s voice in our hearts.”

—**Jim Cymbala**

Some resources for you to study further

Priscilla Shirer

Discerning the voice of God: How to recognize when God is speaking by Priscilla Shirer

Discerning the Voice of God - Bible Study Book - Revised How to Recognize When God Speaks by Priscilla Shirer

Joyce Meyer

It's not that complicated by Joyce Meyer <https://www.joycemeyer.org/everydayanswers/ea-teachings/it-is-not-that-complicated>

Discerning the voice of God

Audio teaching download

<https://store.joycemeyer.org/p-64-discerning-the-voice-of-god.aspx>

IF: Equip (Install the **IF:Equip** app on your phone)

Enjoying Jesus Study

12 Experiences that will draw you closer

Personal Worship

Being led by God - Tim Oladeru

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Sx-ohHo4Co>

DappyTKeys - Piano worship

<https://www.youtube.com/user/DappyTKeys/videos>

www.strengthanddignity.co.nz for further reading and study.