

Hearing From God - Hearing the Voice of God

by Philip H. Page, Jr.

As I continue to wallow in the abyss of unemployment, the thing I want most is for God to talk to me. I know that God talks – He spoke clearly and consistently to Moses, Joshua, Abraham, David, Solomon and many others. In addition to biblical figures, I always hear my pastor or someone at church say, “God told me this” or “and then God said that” But I can’t seem to get Him to talk to me.

My first thought was that maybe God just doesn’t talk to everyone. But then I was reminded of Jesus’ response to Satan’s temptation in Matthew 4:4, “*But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*” In this instance, God not only talks to all men, He has ordained for every man to depend on His word more than on food.

My second thought was that I had unresolved sin in my life. While I may not write all my sins down in a devotion like this one, I would definitely confess my sins to Christ knowing that “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” 1 John 1:9. Just to cover myself, however, I ask God to make me aware of anything that is displeasing to Him.

Having exhausted my mental resources, I turned to the Internet to find a sermon that may shed light on the subject. After a little searching, I found a sermon on the silence of God.

From the Author of *Getting Up Again – Surviving Unemployment and Pursuing Destiny*

(Isn't the Internet great!) The pastor first discusses unresolved sin. Well, I've got that covered so I move on. Next, the pastor mentions the importance of asking God to speak. I've been asking God to speak for a while so I don't think that's it either. Finally, the pastor starts talking about God intentionally not speaking in order for us to better value His voice. This sounds like complete foolishness to me so I stop reading. (The Internet stinks!)

I searched the issue for a while longer but could not find any additional reasons for not hearing from God. In the absence of better information, I have come to the conclusion that hearing from God is a lot simpler than I am making it out to be and it comes down to this. Either God is not talking or we are not listening. That's it. Now my research can focus on these two options.

First, I believe God loves His children and longs to discuss things with them either through His written word or His spoken word. So, if He is not speaking to us, then it is because we are harboring sin in our lives that we do not want to give up. Isaiah 59:1-2 says, *“Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”* If this is the case with you, your only recourse is to trust God's mercy and repent of your sin. He will forgive you, according to His word, and restore you to Himself.

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Second, if God is speaking and you are not hearing Him, then the problem must be that you are not listening. Having said this, I realize that my earlier statement about sin keeping us from hearing the voice of God is incomplete. In reality, there are many ways that we can miss the voice of God. Sin is the main way, but there are many distractions that are not sinful but still keep us occupied long enough to miss His voice. This may include work, family, church, etc. In order to hear from God, we must put these things aside and spend time alone with Him.

For me, the best way to hear from God is to fast from food. This is mainly because food is the largest distraction I have. It's not that I eat food for long periods throughout the day, I just use food to enhance my other activities. I eat three square meals each day with extra time spent preparing (almost) gourmet dinners. I drink coffee as I search the classifieds. I have a protein shake after I work out. I drink more coffee as I read. And I have a snack with my nightly dose of TV. In each event, food is a distraction to whatever it is I am doing. When I fast, I can stay focused on the reason I am doing something. And in many cases, such as TV, I realize that the event isn't something I should be doing at all.

Since food is my main distraction, fasting from food is very productive for me. Your distraction may be something else. If so, I would encourage you to fast from that thing to position yourself to hear from God. If your response to my suggestion is, "I don't need to fast." then remember that you're not fasting from this thing because it's wrong. Jesus, the Son of God, fasted from food for 40 days and nights. It wasn't because food was bad;

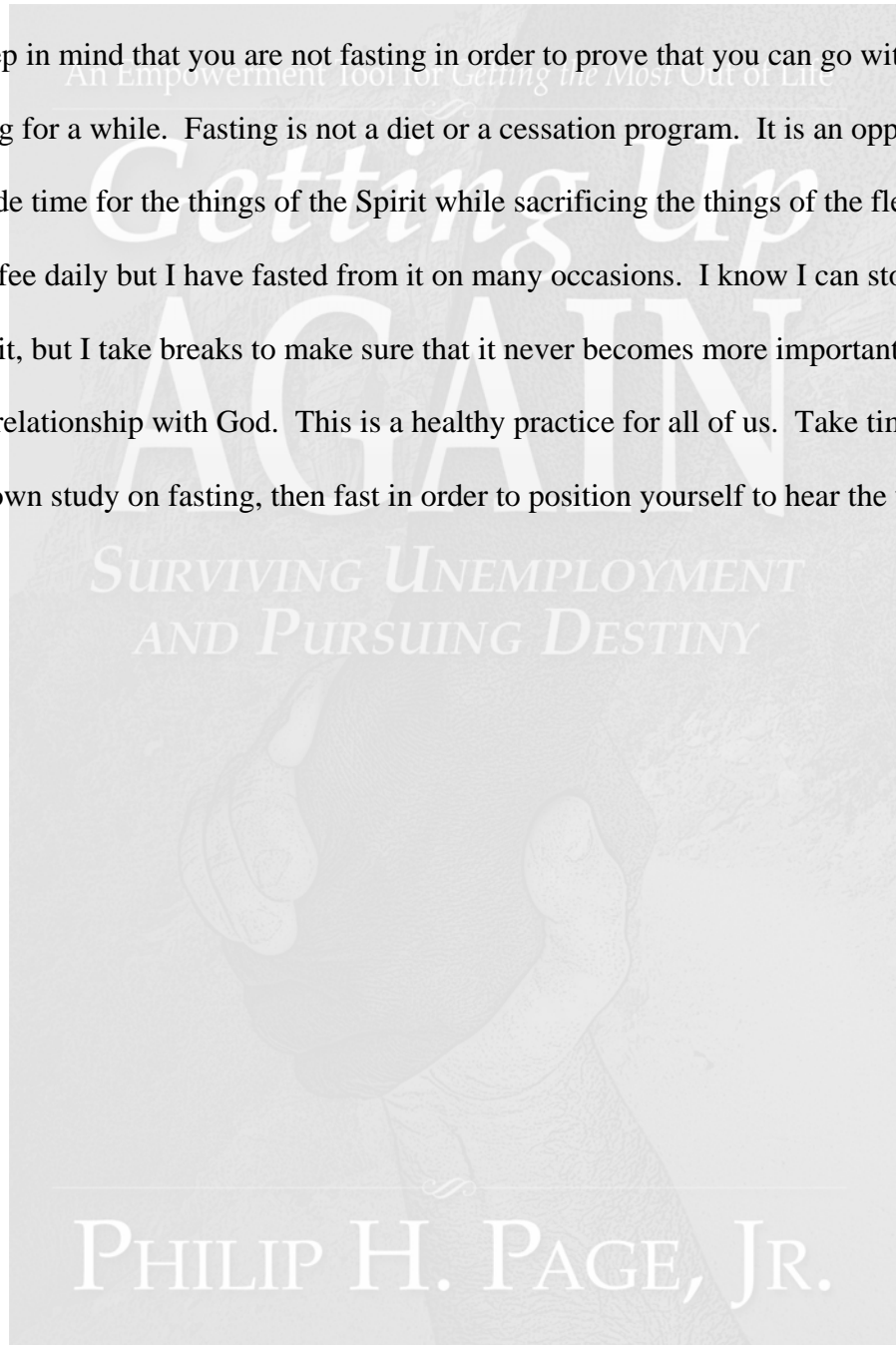
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it was because Jesus recognized that no matter how spiritual we are, natural desires keep us from fully communing with our Lord.

Also, keep in mind that you are not fasting in order to prove that you can go without something for a while. Fasting is not a diet or a cessation program. It is an opportunity to set aside time for the things of the Spirit while sacrificing the things of the flesh. I drink coffee daily but I have fasted from it on many occasions. I know I can stop drinking it, but I take breaks to make sure that it never becomes more important to me than my relationship with God. This is a healthy practice for all of us. Take time out to do your own study on fasting, then fast in order to position yourself to hear the voice of God.



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