



99

THOUGHTS
ON HEARING GOD'S CALL

LEARNING TO
LISTEN AND RESPOND
TO GOD'S VOICE

JOHNNY SCOTT

99 Thoughts on Hearing God's Call

Learning to Listen and Respond to God's Voice

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INTRODUCTION

Esther was an orphan who became a princess...that's when the *real* adventure started. Even though she lived in a grand palace, Esther had her own set of very real problems. She had to figure out how to navigate her own treacherous surroundings in the king's court while the lives of the Jewish people—*her* people—were being threatened. Esther won the approval of the king and through a dramatic sequence of events was put in a place by God to save a nation.

While you're not navigating the perils of palace life, the teenage years can certainly be a dangerous landscape that seems to take no prisoners! Like Esther, you have the same desire: You want to know God's calling for your life. Esther figured out that everything in her life had happened perfectly, so she'd be in the right place at the right time and could save God's chosen people

from destruction. God used Esther in a powerful way. What an exciting life she lived for him! I'm sure she was scared and she didn't always know what to do. Do you ever feel the same way? Ever wonder what God is calling you to do? You know the risks, and so did she.

Hearing God's call on your life is the start of the greatest adventure of all! This isn't kid stuff. The stakes are high. A lot of people on the planet are in some way trying to hear God's call. While there are no plans that work the same for everyone, this book will show you some steps that others have used. Maybe you picked up this book and the truth is you feel guilty because you don't really know how to even *want* to hear God's call. Perhaps you're afraid and you know you should be listening to God in so many moments in your life, but starting to do it has seemed difficult. The good news is that like many other things, with practice, you can grow in this area. There is a *huge* promise you should know as you start to read this book. This promise is from God himself, and it can be found in James 4:8; it says, "*Come close to God, and God will come close to you.*"



Johnny Scott

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Thoughts 1 to 11

These first few thoughts are all about getting your feet wet. You can jump around, read ahead, or plow straight through! All of the thoughts in this book are about hearing God's calling on your life. If the whole idea of hearing God's voice is a new idea to you, then you are not alone. Many people don't think God has anything to say to them, but he does, and as you will learn he speaks in some far-out ways. If you are wrestling with believing that God would want to talk to you, then honesty is a great place to start. Before you begin to read this book, tell him exactly what you're thinking; he already knows anyway, so revealing your true feelings will clear the air so you can start fresh. God is big enough to take on all of our honesty.

Which one of the following places best describes what you currently feel about hearing God's calling (or hearing God at all) in your life?

- I feel like I hear God and know my specific calling.
- I feel like God is trying to tell me what he wants me to do, but I still don't understand him yet.
- I am afraid to hear God's call on my life.
- I don't think God has anything to say to just me.
- I think God only talks to some people.
- I think God only talks to me when I am good.
- God used to talk to me, but for some reason he doesn't anymore.
- I've never thought about God talking to me, but I'm excited to learn.

Whatever describes your thoughts about hearing God, you can be sure that this book will change them. You might want to always have a Bible handy while you're reading this book so you can see how many of these thoughts come straight from God's Word, the Bible.

01

Your past doesn't determine your future calling by God.

Where you come from has nothing to do with how, where, when, or why you are called. We are all used to being judged by others. It seems like people want to decide for us at times what we can accomplish based on what they see. God doesn't work that way.

What's different about God's calling is that *"people judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart"* (1 Samuel 16:7).

02

Satan wants to keep you from hearing God's call.

Satan will tell us we don't deserve to experience God because of things we've done wrong. But that's when we need to be with God more than ever! God will not turn you away when you're broken before him. Don't let Satan steal moments with God from you!

+ EXTRA
THOUGHT

Read Psalm 51
(and especially
verse 17!).

03

It's never too late to hear God's call.

When we grow away from God, it usually happens so slowly that we don't notice our moments with him slipping away. While it may take awhile to slip away, it only takes one decision on our part to re-engage in a moment spent with God. That's great news for all of us. God runs to us when we take the first tiny step. Read the story in the Bible from Luke 15:11-32 about a father and a son. The father in the story represents God. It shows exactly how God is patiently waiting for us to take one step back toward him.

04

You hear more when you listen with your whole heart.

Things get in the way of hearing God when you make them more important than God. The Bible calls anything put above God idolatry. One quick way to do a checkup on this is by looking at how you spend your time, money, and energy. If there is something competing for the number one spot in your heart, you have to cut it out of your life. Jesus says that we can't have two masters or we will love one and hate the other (Matthew 6:24).

05

Hearing (and obeying) God's call is serious business!

Following God's call on your life should have warning labels all over it that read: DANGEROUS!!! USE EXTREME CAUTION. It's rarely the easiest, most comfortable choice. When you realize that there's no other choice but to follow God, that's when things get very exciting. You will see...keep on reading!

06

Warning! Warning! Don't use God's calling as an excuse.

Using God's calling as an excuse can be dangerous. God's hope for our lives is a very personal and serious matter. It should never be used by us to get us out of things we don't want to do. I had

a friend who was dumped by a girl. She told him, “God is not calling me to date you.” While this may be true in some cases, my buddy not only got dumped by the girl, but he felt like he got dumped by God! Bummer.

07

You're not on your own!

It's so important to God that you hear his calling on your life that he sent a Helper just to make sure you hear him. This Helper is called the Holy Spirit, and he comes to live inside of us when we ask Jesus to be the Lord of our lives.

+ EXTRA THOUGHT

The Holy Spirit can even talk in a language only God understands that tells God what we're thinking and feeling. Even when we can't put our thoughts into words, God understands us. Romans 8:26 says, *“And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.”*



08

Before you ever wanted to hear God's calling, he was pursuing you!

Are there moments from your past when you felt really close to God? Go back to those experiences, and thank him for being with you then. Think through some of your best and most difficult memories. Think of how God was working even if you didn't see it then.

09

Are you afraid of hearing God's true calling for your life?

Think about this: You should be more afraid of not following God than of anything other people can do to you. Proverbs 29:25 says, *"Fearing people is a dangerous trap, but trusting the Lord means safety."*

10

Sometimes people don't hear God's call because they have shut him out of areas in their lives.

Have you done this with certain things you don't want him to have control over? Think of everywhere you go and what you do. Where do you feel the farthest from God? Go through this

exercise: Speak out loud and invite God into everything you do in a normal day, even the goofy stuff.



If you want to know God's plan for your life, just *ask!*

God listens when we pray. There is power in simply asking God for his plan. It's not only the easy way out, but it's smart! Sometimes he wants to teach us valuable lessons through our journey. He is a God of action—he doesn't want to see us struggle unnecessarily to find his will for our lives.