

TO OUR DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST,

TODAY, WE WANTED TO GIVE YOU A TASTE OF SOME MORE OF THE WRITING OF A CONFERENCE SPEAKER, DALLAS WILLARD AND A CO-AUTHOR OF HIS, JAN JOHNSON, SO WE HAVE SELECTED THREE OF THEIR DEVOTIONALS FOR YOUR EDIFICATION AND YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT. WE HOPE YOU ARE BLESSED WITH THEM AND WILL CONSIDER THEIR WRITINGS. THE THREE DEVOTIONALS ARE:

PREOCCUPIED (APPRECIATING) WITH GOD'S PRESENCE
SCRIPTURE: Exodus 33:14

(ENJOYING) GOD'S MULTIFACETED WAYS
SCRIPTURE: Daniel 1:17

(BEING)LED BY GOD
SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 3:5-6

PREOCCUPIED WITH GOD'S PRESENCE
SCRIPTURE: Exodus 33:14

(14)The Lord replied, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

For many of us who profess to follow Christ, much inward change may be needed before we can hear God correctly. When trouble comes – for example, when we have car problems or get into a dispute with someone – how long does it take us to bring it to God in prayer? When we see an accident or some violent behavior or hear an ambulance down the street, do we think to hold those concerned up to God in prayer? When we meet with a person for any reason, do we go in a spirit of prayer so that we are prepared to minister to them, or they to us? When we are alone, do we recognize that God is present with us? Does our mind spontaneously return to God when not intensely occupied, as the needle of the compass turns to the North Pole when removed from nearer magnetic sources?

MEDITATE: Say Exodus 33:14 several times to yourself. Then picture yourself stuck because your car or bus has broken down. Repeat this verse again. Picture yourself at an upcoming social engagement (friendly lunch, family gathering) and repeat the verse again. Imagine other scenarios where you are not likely to practice the presence of God, and repeat it again.

Excerpts from Dallas Willard and Jan Johnson, *Hearing God Through the Year*, 2004, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, USA. (Pages 220)

GOD'S MULTIFACETED WAYS
SCRIPTURE: Daniel 1:17

(17)To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

What we know about guidance and the divine-human encounter from the Bible and the lives of those who have gone before us shows that *God's communications come to us in many forms*. We should expect nothing else, for this variety is appropriate to the complexity of human personality and cultural history. And God in redemption is willing to reach out to humanity in whatever ways are suitable to its fallen and weakened condition. We should look carefully at these many forms to see which ones are most suited to the kind of relationship God intends to have with his people.

REFLECT: While God most often speaks to our thoughts especially as we read Scripture, it's important to be open to any form of communication he may use. What forms are you most open to? Least open to? (Consider such things as literature and stories, nature, visions, dreams, words of others, circumstances.)

Excerpts from Dallas Willard and Jan Johnson, ***Hearing God Through the Year***, 2004, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, USA. (Pages 23)

(BEING) LED BY GOD
SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 3:5-6

(5-6)Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight.

There is massive testimony to and widespread faith in God's personal, guiding communication with us – far more than in blindly controlled guidance. This is not only recorded in scripture and emblazoned upon the history of the church; it also lies at the heart of our worship services and our individualized relationships with God, and it actually serves as the basis of authority for our leaders and teachers. Only very rarely will someone profess to lead or teach the people of God on the basis of his or her education, natural talents and denominational connections alone. Credibility in any sort of spiritual leadership derives from a life in the Spirit, from the person's personal encounter and on-going relationship with God. (In essence, we want your ways, God.)

MEDITATE; Read Proverbs 3:5-6 and consider the ways you are a leader in a friendship, family, church, neighborhood or workplace. (Being a leader means that people listen to you and value your opinion regardless of whether you fill a role or hold a title.) Read the verses again and ask God to show you in what ways you need to listen for God to speak in those relationships and circumstances.

Excerpts from Dallas Willard and Jan Johnson, ***Hearing God Through the Year***, 2004, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, USA. (Pages 25)