

## EPISODE 5

# THE SOUNDS OF GOD

## What does God sound like?

How did Joseph know the dream was from God? How did he know it wasn't just something sparked by his imagination as he slept; some crazy apparition brought on by the stench of animals at his bedside or the spicy lentils he ate the night before?

We read stories like this throughout the Bible. All the significant characters heard from God and acted on it. Somehow they had learnt to recognize God's voice. The Bible says Adam and Eve heard the 'sound of the Lord God walking in the garden'. But what does God sound like?

### Matthew 2:13-15

1. Do you think we can ever be sure we are hearing from God?

Recognizing God's voice is a learning process. In this school, the Holy Spirit is our teacher and our everyday lives are the classroom. We learn through experiencing his voice personally. After all, this is not a second-hand relationship.

Over time we get better at recognizing God's voice. It's a bit like when a close friend calls on the phone... there's no real need to introduce themselves: "Hi there, this is your friend speaking. Remember me; I'm the one with the dark hair?" The more you know someone the easier it is to recognize them. Certain words, the tone of their voice or a particular mannerism is enough to communicate clearly.

## John 14:25-26

2. How has personal experience taught you what the voice of God sounds like?

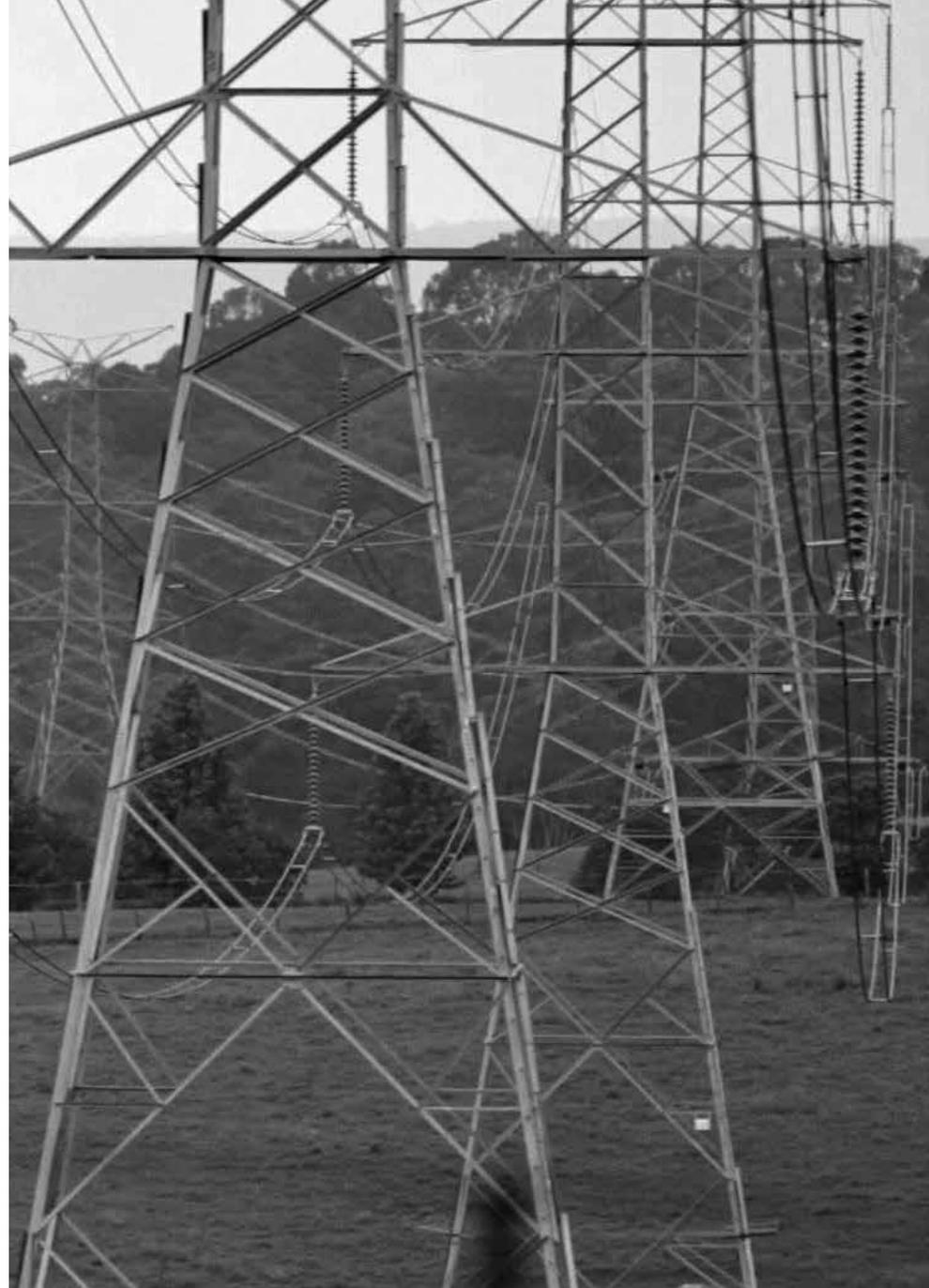
I am not sure why the solution to our problem suddenly came to me one day. It's hard to admit, but the reason we had six months of fuzzy reception was because there was no antenna plugged in.

The TV shows were always transmitting – the problem was we were not tuning in!

God's voice is a little like that. He is speaking, but in order to hear him, we need to put up our spiritual antennae. We need to be seeking him and asking him things and then tuning in to listen.

## Habakkuk 2:1

3. The image of Habakkuk standing on the city walls looking for a messenger who has come in answer to his complaint is akin to 'keeping our antennae up'. In what ways do you watch for God's answers?





He can use anything! All creation is at his disposal. The psalmist says that the heavens pour forth speech – the skies proclaim his work.

Like an artist, God speaks in a variety of ways.  
He is a masterful communicator.

Often he uses ordinary, everyday things. Think of Jeremiah back in the days of Ancient Israel. Jeremiah's watching a potter working at his wheel. The potter starts with a misshapen pot, breaks it and remoulds it to produce a work of art. In this simple gesture, God speaks to Jeremiah with a profound truth about the heart of the nation of Israel and His intention for it.

**Psalm 19:1-2, Numbers 22:26-31 and Jeremiah 18:1-6**

4. In what ways do you usually hear from God? Are you open to hearing God's voice in other ways?

Sometimes God uses words to speak. On rare occasions he speaks out loud. But mostly he speaks in an inaudible way – the Bible describes it in Elijah's life as a 'still small voice'; or a 'gentle whisper'. It comes as a sentence or a phrase forming in our minds.

**1 Kings 19:11-12**

5. How do we discern God's 'still small voice' from other thoughts?

God can speak to us in pictures. The use of visual imagery is widespread in the biblical material and even though at first it may seem unusual, once we become familiar with it, we find that a picture really is 'worth a thousand words'.

**Jeremiah 23:18, Numbers 12:6-8 and Ezekiel 37:1-14**

6. What is the benefit of receiving God's words in picture form?

It comes as a surprise to most people in the Western world that dreams are one of the most common forms of communication in the Scriptures. Remember Joseph's dreams of the fat and skinny cows, Jacob's dream of a stairway to heaven and of course the five dreams of the Christmas story. Some of the most pivotal points in biblical history began in a dream!

7. Have you ever received a dream from God? Do you expect him to speak while you are sleeping?

Sometimes God uses words to speak. Sometimes, he uses pictures when we are asleep. Often he will inspire others to speak prophetically and of course, he loves to use his written word, the Bible. Occasionally he uses out-of-the-box methods such as donkeys and old pop songs in the shower.

8. Without sharing prayer needs, take time to listen to God and pray for each person in your group. Do not be afraid of silence.

**“My sheep recognise my voice;  
I know them and they follow me.”**

**JESUS, JOHN 10:27 (NLT)**