

5 Tips for Discerning God's Voice

1. Is what you heard affirmed in Scripture?

Any time you think God is speaking to you, the best way to make sure it could be from God is to check with Scripture. God will never speak to you in ways that contradict his written Word.

At the same time, Scripture gives us God's general will for all Christians, whereas God's still small voice (his nudge or leading in our lives) can give God's specific will for each of us. God's specific will would never contradict God's general will either, but rather apply the general will to your life in helpful and direction-giving ways.

2. Does what you heard conform to God's character?

God is loving and God is good. Those are two great places to start when hearing God's voice. Is what you are heard in prayer lining up with those two character traits? God has many other character traits, so every time you are figuring out whether what you heard in prayer is from him, start by asking if it aligns with his love and goodness.

3. Is what you heard confirmed by wise and spiritual people?

As in Samuel's story, and especially if you keep reading in that passage, Eli served as a wise counselor for him in hearing God's voice. All of us hear inaccurately sometimes, and it is important that you check what you think you heard with the mentors in your life who also hear from God.

4. Will what you heard produce fruit in your life?

If what you heard comes true, will it produce good things in your life? Will it make you more loving, kind, patient, joyful, gentle, good, or self-controlled? If the things you heard in prayer are not leading you to better character and developing you into the image of God, it is probably not God you heard.

5. Is what you heard about one of the "three Gs": guys/gals, gold, or glory?

If you think you heard that you should marry some particular guy or gal, or that you will be rich, famous, or influence multitudes, then you need to be very cautious. Humans are too self-centered and egotistical to handle such words, so we should always take such messages with a fair amount of "Let's just wait and see on that one!"