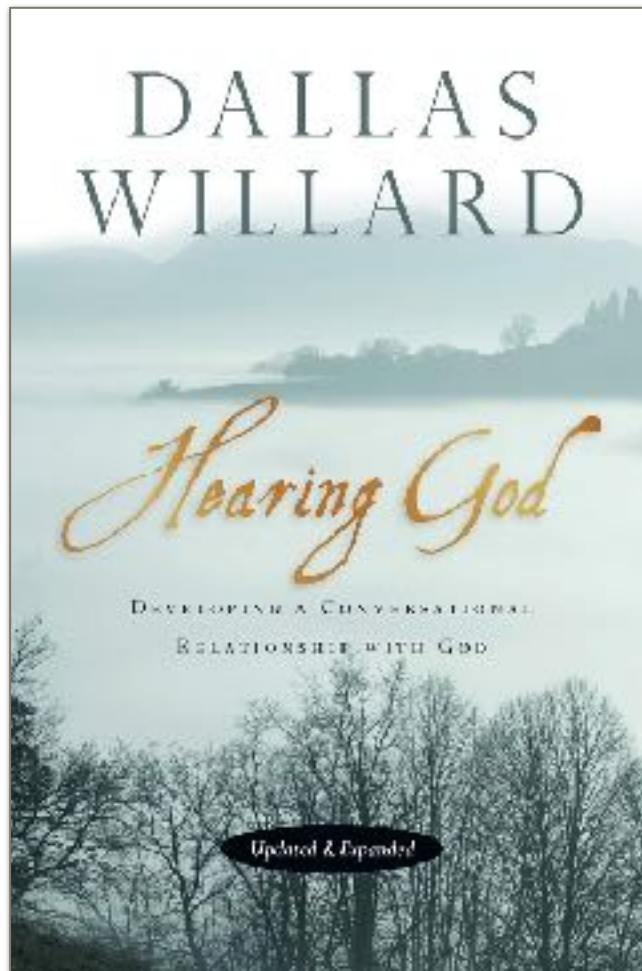


Hearing God

Study Guide

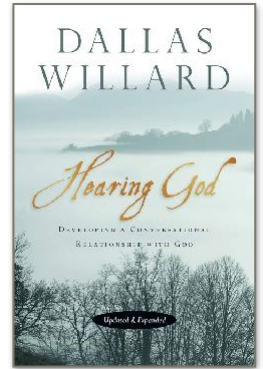


HEARING GOD Study Guide Table of Contents

Book Table of Contents	3
<i>HEARING GOD</i> Key Themes	4
2022 “HEARING GOD Course”	5
“HEARING GOD Course” Schedule & Reading	6
Session 1 Handout - A Word from Dallas & Book Preface	7
Session 2 Handout - Chapter 1: A Paradox About Hearing God	8
Session 3 Handout - Chapter 2: Guidelines for Hearing from God	9
Session 4 Handout - Chapter 3: Never Alone	10
Session 5 Handout - Chapter 4: Our Communicating Cosmos	11
Session 6 Handout - Chapter 5: The Still, Small Voice and Its Rivals	12
Session 7 Handout - Chapter 6: The Word of God & The Rule of God	13
Session 8 Handout - Chapter 7: Redemption Thru The Word of God	14
Session 9 Handout - Chapter 8: Recognizing the Voice of God	15
Session 10 Handout - Chapter 9: A Life More Than Guidance	16
<i>HEARING GOD</i> Studies by Dallas Willard with Jan Johnson	17
Additional Resources	18
Post-Script from Jesus College	19

HEARING GOD BOOK Table of Contents (2012 Expanded version)

A Word from the Author	9-10
Preface	11-16
Chapter 1 A Paradox About Hearing God	17-36
Chapter 2 Guidelines for Hearing from God	37-55
Chapter 3 Never Alone	56-83
Chapter 4 Our Communicating Cosmos	84-113
Chapter 5 The Still, Small Voice and Its Rivals	114-153
Chapter 6 The Word of God and The Rule of God	154-188
Chapter 7 Redemption Through The Word of God	189-216
Chapter 8 Recognizing the Voice of God	217-252
Chapter 9 A Life More Than Guidance	253-281
Epilogue	282-289



HEARING GOD Key Themes

~ Today there is a desperate need for large numbers of people throughout our various social groupings who are competent and confident in their own **practice of life in Christ and in hearing his voice.** (p. 15)

~ God walks in our midst as part of how the Kingdom of God is in our midst. (Luke 17:20-21) A person who regards **personal communion and communication with God** both as life-changing episodes and as daily bread...are people who seek to focus their minds on God, to pray moment by moment. (p. 27)

~ I fear that many people seek to **hear God solely as a device** for obtaining their own safety, comfort and righteousness. (p. 33)

~ Our failure to hear God has its deepest roots in a failure to understand, accept and grow into **a conversational relationship with God.** (35)

~ God is able to penetrate and intertwine Himself within the fibers of the human self in such a way that those who are **enveloped in His loving companionship** will never be alone. (59)

~ We become so close to God we don't have to wait to hear His words. We don't have to be asked but are **engaged in free-hearted collaboration with Jesus** and His friends in the Kingdom. (72)

~ A major point of this book is that **the still, small voice** is the preferred and most valuable form of communication for God's purposes. (118) Hearing this divine but small voice is what **lies at the heart of a relationship with God.** (155)

~ **Ask [God] to speak.** Listen for the voice or thought. Devote time to another task neither engrosses or allows intense focus on the matter at hand. Be sure of how great and good God is. Look for a thought with God's quality, spirit and content. Consider discussing with others. Possibly repeat the process. Limit 2 or 3 days to the process. Being uncertain doesn't mean you haven't heard. (p. 265)

~ Hearing God 's word will never make sense except when it is set within **a larger life of a certain kind.** (p. 274)

~ ~ ~

People who practice life in Christ and hearing his voice in a conversational relationship with God, enveloped in His loving companionship, engaged in free-hearted collaboration with Jesus, know the still, small voice lies at the heart of a relationship with God within a larger life of a certain kind.

Three Suggested “V-I-M”** Participation Levels

ENJOY - *Peruse & Listen* — Overview the assigned chapter before each Session then join the weekly webinar to enjoy the dialogue.

PARTICIPATE - *Read & Inquire* — Read the entire chapter before each Session, take notes, and capture questions to bring to each Session.

RECEIVE - *Discipline & Engage* — Invest the first 10 weeks of 2022 making this Course not simply a free webinar added to your routine, but an intentional discipline in your spiritual growth journey. Ideally, invite a partner to journey with you to better learn, apply & grow. Level 3 steps can include:

1) READ the assigned section/chapter before each Session. Capture notes in your book or electronically, reread the scriptures referenced, then review your notes again before the Session.

2) INQUIRE - Bring questions to digest the content and engage the presenters & other students. Linger longer for the “Q&C” after each Session.

3) DEVOTE - Meditate daily starting January 1st in [Hearing God Through the Year](#) compiled by Jan Johnson with excerpts from *Hearing God*. Here is a [Reading Plan App](#) to go with the devotional.

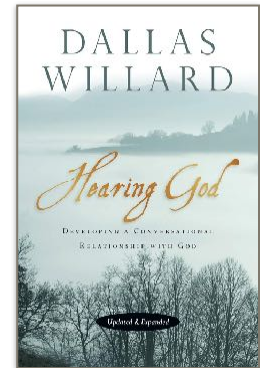
4) VIEW - Enjoy 18-22 minutes weekly over 10 weeks of the (4) videos of Dallas’ [Hearing God Retreat](#). (Dallas Willard Ministries YouTube channel)



5) SOLITUDE - Invest a solo time weekly to spend an hour with Jesus discussing your key discovery from the week.

6) REFLECT - At the end of the Course, write yourself a letter or a journal entry summarizing the impact of the 10 weeks on your next 10,000 years.

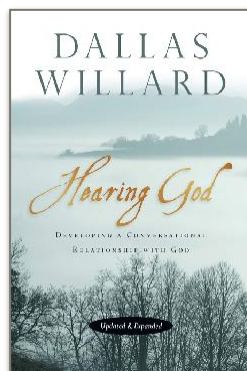
[** V-I-M = *Vision-Intention-Means* — Dallas calls VIM the reliable pattern for spiritual change, or any change. As you envison a life of hearing God and truly intend to want to hear God, you will seek and find the means to practice a life of hearing God. For more on V-I-M, see *Renovation of the Heart*, chapter 5 ([Webinar on the book](#).) Another rich resource on V-I-M is in the [Life With God Bible](#) Introduction, xxv-xxxvi]



2022 COURSE SCHEDULE & READING

DATE	SESSION	BOOK SECTION	THEME
January 6	Session 1	Preface	Hearing God: A Daring Idea
January 13	Session 2	Chapter 1	A Paradox about Hearing God
January 20	Session 3	Chapter 2	Guidelines for Hearing God
January 27	Session 4	Chapter 3	Never Alone
February 3	Session 5	Chapter 4	Our Communicating Cosmos
February 10	Session 6	Chapter 5	The Still, Small Voice & Rivals
February 17	Session 7	Chapter 6	The Word & Rule of God
February 24	Session 8	Chapter 7	Redemption thru the Word
March 3	Session 9	Chapter 8	Recognizing the Voice of God
March 10	Session 10	Chapter 9	A Life More Than Guidance

If you miss a Session, want to study more, or teach others the material, recorded Sessions + Slides PDF are posted in the [Jesus College Library](#) along with over 200 free Dallas Willard resources including 7 other Dallas Willard Courses.



A Word from the Author (p. 9-10)

How can you be sure God is speaking to you?

Moving beyond, "Hearing God?" into life in the Kingdom of God (9)

"You are an unceasing spiritual being, created for an intimate and transforming friendship with the creative Community called the Trinity." (10)

PREFACE: Hearing God — Dangerous or Necessary for Human Existence?

What if the human system will not function without hearing God?

Created for Intimate Friendship with God - *now and forever*

Exodus 29:43-46; 33:11, Psalm 23, Isaiah 41:8, John 15:14; Hebrews 13:5-6

At the mercy of our ideas...especially ideas about God. (12)

Hearing God

Guidance to live His will - a kind of life He wants for us...with our initiatives

Living the Ten Commandments...but not just doing what God commands

Parable of a Servant (Luke 17:7-10)

Doing only what we were told to do - or - Resisting Religious Authority

Jesus' Community of Transforming Love - A Whole Life in the Will of God

"Today there is a desperate need for large numbers of people throughout our various social groupings who are competent and confident in their own practice of life in Christ and in hearing his voice." (15)

Chapter Summaries

- 1 - Hearing God and How it works
- 2 - Guidelines & Misunderstandings
- 3 - "Never Alone" - God With Us
- 4 - Objections to God Speaking

- 5 - How God Speaks
- 6 - Word & Rule of God
- 7 - Process of Hearing the Word
- 8 - Recognizing God's Voice

Hearing God in Scripture - 6 Studies by Jan Johnson in *Hearing God*

- 1 - Guidelines - I Kings 19:2-18 (p. 48)
- 2 - God Speaking - 2 Kings 6:11-17 (103)
- 3 - God's Voice - Pr. 20:27; I Co. 2 (131)
- 4 - Word of God - Ps. 19 (164)
- 5 - Change - Romans 5 (207)
- 6 - Voice of God - I Chr. 14 (247)

Meditation & Application

Parable of the Servant - Luke 17:7-10

- ~ Is doing what God wants the center of my relationship with Him?
- ~ How is hearing God part of my greater life with Jesus in His Father's Kingdom?
- ~ How confident am I in my practice of hearing the voice of Jesus?

Our Hearing Problem

- Sincere Christians on the outside looking in.
Lacking the language or how it works. (18)
* An Eli Ministry to the Next Generation - I Samuel 3:8-9

Ongoing Conversation with God — *What we were meant for*

- Conversing while Abiding - John 14:22-23, "*Make our home with them.*"
- The Kingdom of God in Our Midst (Lk. 17:21) Participants not Consumers
- Life Changing Episodes & Daily Bread (27)

The Paradox in Hearing God

- On the one hand...Massive Testimony to God Speaking
On the other hand...Little clarity & competence hearing God

Steps Toward a Solution —> Divine Hearing Aids

- 1st - God communicates in many forms
- 2nd - Wrong motives to hear God - to solely secure a safe, comfortable future
- 3rd - Misconceiving the Nature of Our Heavenly Father
How Kingdom authority works - and - Thinking of God rightly

A Conversational Relationship - John 10:4, "*They know His voice*"

Who God is, who we are and the relationship between us

"Our failure to hear God has its deepest roots in... _____." (35)

Meditation & Application Samuel Hearing from God - I Samuel 16:1-13

- ~ What do I need to think, feel or believe about God to ask Him questions?
- ~ Can I "leave" like Samuel without knowing all the details? How does faith apply?
- ~ What would I like most about having a conversational relationship with God?

A Creative, Cooperative Friendship with God

Prayer is an honest exchange between people who are _____ . (39)

Primary goal: Not just hearing God, but _____ . (39)

Guideline #1 — Love God with all Our Being.

God is not a Taskmaster or Cosmic Boss

Communion with God is the context for communication (42)

Guideline #2 — Mere Humans can talk with God

Divine Incarnation - fully human, fully divine

How to Believe the Bible Stories

“Read the Bible as if we had been there...” otherwise:

- 1.) The Bible becomes a book of Doctrine
- 2.) We stop reading the Bible with interest, intelligence, joy, imagination

“Who, Me Lord?” = Humble Arrogance

First, You are that important!

Second, God speaking to you doesn’t make you important!

Strength of True Meekness: Not 3 P’s: _____ , _____ , _____ (53)

Guideline #3 — Hearing God doesn’t make Us Righteous

Examine Authority & Being Right: *Knowledge puffs up; Love builds up*

Meditation & Application Lectio Divina #1 (48-51) I Kings 19:2-18

- ~ Who is God to me? Taskmaster? Cosmic Boss? Angry Father? Gracious Abba?
- ~ What is the difference between communion, communication and guidance?
- ~ How do humility & pride conflict when hearing God? Being right or righteous?
- ~ Which of the Three Guidelines stand out to me? Why?

Immanuel - The With-God Life Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 28:20

~ God is able to penetrate and intertwine Himself within the fibers of the human self in such a way that those who are enveloped in His loving companionship will never be alone. (59)

The Giver and His Gifts Genesis 15:1, Hebrews 13:5-6; Romans 8:39

Lonely people live apart from God

As Kings & Queens and Priests — What a life with God looks like

1. Blind Faith - Past experiences, faith in the faith of others or abstract reasonings
2. Sensing God's Presence - A very powerful sense, feeling or impression
3. A God Who Acts - Extraordinary events or powerful effects Acts 14:27
4. Conversational Relationship - Would not a personal God also talk with us?

Two Types of Guidance — Mechanical & Personal

Two Types of Reasonable, Intelligible, Personal Communication

1. The Word of God
2. The Work(s) of God

Friends with God —> Shared Understanding + Shared Work = Concrete Reality

Three Mistaken Views of How God Speaks to Us (76-82) John 10: 4, 27

1. A Message a Minute - God is telling you what to do at every turn
2. It's All in the Bible - Unless it's not in the Bible
3. Whatever Comes is God's Will - And I'm not responsible

We become so close to God we don't have to wait to hear His words. We don't have to be asked but are engaged in free-hearted collaboration with Jesus and His friends in the Kingdom. (72)

Meditation & Application Isaiah 58:9,11

- ~ "Ah, look at all the lonely people?" Does a With-God life end loneliness? How?
- ~ Where am I in the four forms of being with God? Anything to add or remove
- ~ Which of the Three Mistaken views do I struggle with?

The Limits of Signs — Jesus refused to do religious stunts or signs

Necessity of General Understanding of God - Our understanding must grow before we can have any significant appreciation of what we are experiencing on occasions when God intervenes in our lives. (87)

* Peter's Confession - Matthew 16:16-17

Two Key Questions:

Q1 — What kind of world do we live in?

Q2 — How does God relate to us, confined as we are within it [our world]?

Hearing God? Most People's honest response will be: (89)

1. God would not communicate with run of the mill people
2. God does not communicate with them in that way
3. God cannot do so
4. God should not

Four Truths to Respond to the Above Negatives

I. God Would (89) - Jesus made it clear how accessible God is to the weak.

II. God Does (90) - Are we in tune ready vessels to do business with God?

III. God Can (94) - Does God have to go through physical space?

IV. God Should (106) - Unity is the light of the world, the aim of all humanity

Meditation & Application

Lectio Divina #2 (103-104) II Kings 6:11-17

~ "The human heart is largely dependent upon the head." (101) Is it?

~ What testimony(ies) inspire my faith? Do stories have limited ability for faith?

~ Does Science make hearing God questionable? Is God in Google?

6:: THE STILL, SMALL VOICE & RIVALS ~ Chapter 5 pages 114-153

The Primacy of the Inner Voice — A major point of this book is that the still, small voice is the preferred and most valuable form of communication for God's purposes...showing forth the reality of the Kingdom of God as [we] go. (118)

Reaffirming our Participation in Biblical Experience - As if happening to us

Generally speaking, God will not compete for our attention.
In most cases, God will not run over us. (120)

Biblical Stories of People Who Hear God - Six Ways (121-136)

A Phenomenon Plus a Voice (121)

A Supernatural Messenger or Angel (121)

Dreams and Visions (123)

An Audible Voice (124)

The Human Voice (125)

The Human Spirit or the "Still, Small Voice" (130-136)

Growing in Oneness of Mind - God comes precisely through our minds

Our Quest to Hear God - 10 Ways (136-151)

God Speaks Today (136)

Conversing With God (138)

Silence is Not an Answer (138)

Need More than the Bible? (139)

Bible Deism (142)

Turning People On, Not Off (142)

The Priority of the Voice (144)

More Spectacular, Less Mature (147)

How Obscurity Can Serve Us (148)

The Signs are Not the Reality (150)

Hearing God Beyond Word - Finally, a silence that speaks (151-152)

Meditation & Application Lectio Divina #3 (131-133) Pr. 20:27; I Co. 2:9-16

~ Does God speak audibly today? Did/could/would God speak to me?

~ Have I experienced God speaking to you through a human? If so, when?

~ Is the "still, small voice" in my mind the primary means of hearing God?

7:: THE WORD OF GOD & RULE OF GOD ~ Chapter 6 pages 154-188

The Primacy of the Inner Voice — Hearing this divine but small voice is what lies at the heart of a relationship with God. (155)

Astonishing Faith in the Power of Words - The Roman Centurion (155-156)
Most of what we think we see as the struggle of faith is really the struggle to act as if we had faith when in fact we do not.

Words and the Word (156-158)

God created, God rules and God redeems through His word.

Both the Son of God and the Bible are the Word of God.

Words...

As Spiritual Forces (158-159) of a Kingdom (159-160) for Creation (160-166)

The Word of God Incarnate — the Son of God (166-169)

The Power of God's Kingdom Words (169-172)

The Power of Words with Us (172-184)

The Bible & The Word of God (184-188) *One and the same?*

Meditation & Application Lectio Divina #4 (164-166) Ps. 19:1-6; 119:89-91

- ~ How did this chapter encourage me? Challenge me? Inform me?
- ~ Where do I, or people I know, treat faith in Christ superstitiously?
- ~ What person needs to hear through my words God's Kingdom power today?

8:: REDEMPTION THRU THE WORD OF GOD ~ Chapter 7 p. 189-216

Discerning God's voice is essentially just one dimension of a certain kind of life, the eternal kind of life, a life lived in conversational relationship with God. (189)

"Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." John 17:3

Born Again by the Word of God (192-200)

Through the Spirit and the Word planted in our hearts washing away the dirt!

Union with Christ (201-209)

Communication...Communion...Union.

The Written Word in the Progress of Redemption (209-216)

A Holy Meeting with God

The General Train of Development (214) - *Do not hurry. Do not dabble.*

1. Information that it is so
2. Longing for it to be so
3. Affirmation that it must be so
4. Invocation to God to make it so
5. Appropriation by God's grace so that it is so

Meditation & Application Lectio Divina #5 (207-209) Rom. 5:10-11; 6:4, 8-11

- ~ What is the process of me becoming a child of the light - Philippians 2:15-16?
- ~ How has this chapter described the role of the Word of God in the process?
- ~ Do I have faith "in" Christ or the faith "of" Christ? How might this change?
- ~ What work will I do this week to pray scripture and memorize scripture?

Voice Recognition...by Experience

The Three Lights - Circumstances; Holy Spirit Impressions; the Bible

"Limited to guidance, not helping us understand the conversation." (225)

"Pray & Watch" W_____ A _____ T _____ C _____ H _____

The Conditions of Responsible Judgment (225-226)

1st - With our Judgment. We still decide 2nd - God's Directive
Biblical study & meditation; the Spirit moving; Intelligent alertness

The Voice of God: (227-237) "*He taught with authority.*" Matthew 7:29

- The quality, spirit and content of God's voice (235)

The Centrality of the Bible...Again (237-240)

"We stand within a community of the spoken to." (239)

Four Practical Results in Life...in the Kingdom of God (240-246)

1. Direct daily access to God and His kingdom for all believers.
2. Confidence, comfort and peace
3. Protection from mad religionists and legalism
4. A quality of life like those in Scripture

"What we have here are not mere impressions, impulses or feelings. Rather, we have specific and full cognitive or propositional content concerning what is the case, what is to be done and what will happen." (247)

Meditation & Application Lectio Divina #6 (247-249) I Chronicles 14:8-17

- ~ What do I think about the three factors that help me recognize God's voice?
- ~ How can my Bible reading be more "study, meditation, intelligent, alert"?
- ~ Which of the practical Kingdom Living results am I seeking in my life right now?

How to Hear the Voice of God

How may we come to live confidently and sensibly with God as a conversational presence in our lives?

We come to know the quality, spirit and content of God's voice.

- Valuable book summary —> p. 255-256

Paying Attention to How We Hear (257-258)

"Anyone who has ears to hear, listen." Mark 4:23-25

God on Demand - Wanting...or not wanting to hear God (258-260)

Listening for God...not a Gimmick (260-265)

Ask Him to speak. Listen for the voice or thought. Devote time to another task neither engrosses or allows intense focus on the matter at hand. Be sure of how great and good God is. Look for a thought with God's quality, spirit and content. Consider discussing with others. Possibly repeat the process. Limit 2 or 3 days to the process. Being uncertain doesn't mean you haven't heard.

Deciding on Our Own - What if God does not send a particularized word?

God's will for our part - "Responsible citizenship in His Kingdom". (266)

The Perfect Will of God (268-271)

Whatever lies in His moral will undertaken in faith, not precise dictation, may allow for a number of different alternatives. (269)

A Cosmic Conflict, Firm, Never Beyond Risk, Well With-God (271-276)

The key concept underlying all the themes I have raised in this book is this: *Hearing God's word will never make sense except when it is set within a larger life of a certain kind.* (274)

We must move ultimately beyond hearing God and into a life greater than our own - that of the Kingdom of God. (275)

Practical "How to" for Hearing the Voice of God

A Formula for Living with God's Voice (276-278)

Intend, plan & make provision to be morally right and do service to the good then...

- Meditate constantly on God's principles in the Scriptures
- Pay close attention to God's communications in our mind and heart
- Pray constantly and specifically
- Listen carefully and deliberately

When God does not Speak (279)

- Ask God if a hindrance is in you
- Take counsel from at least two people
- Correct any causes for why God's word would not come
- Act on what seems best to you if you can not find a cause

Final Meditation for Eternal Application Psalm 1; Joshua 1:8, Matthew 6:33

~ What do I think is the human issue Jesus came to address? (see p. 276)

~ What 2-3 key IDEAS of "Hearing God" have I gained from God through the Word of God and Dallas Willard?

~ What practical MEANS have I discovered in this study - the stuff of my "daily bread" - to foster a kind of life to hear God?

~ How could I finish this sentence,
"The kind of life I am developing with Jesus today is..."

~ Who is the still, small voice of the Lord bringing to my mind to invite to join me in this kind of life?

HEARING GOD ~ Six Studies for Individuals & Groups

InterVarsity Press - 2021 - \$12.00

INTRODUCTION 7
Can We Really Hear God?
SESSION ONE 9
Conversing with God
<i>1 Samuel 16:1-13</i>
SESSION TWO 15
A Relational View of God
<i>Matthew 25:18-30</i>
SESSION THREE 21
The Bible's Role in a Conversational Life with God
<i>Psalms 19:7-14</i>
SESSION FOUR 27
The Still, Small Voice
<i>1 Kings 19:2-18</i>
LISTENING FOR GOD 34
SESSION FIVE 36
Hearing the Unexpected
<i>Acts 10:9-23, 44-48</i>
SESSION SIX 42
Colaborers with God
<i>1 Chronicles 14:8-17</i>

An Additional HEARING GOD Resource

[\(4\) HEARING GOD Resources from Dallas Willard Ministries](#)

~ ~ ~

Book Excerpt - Article from *Renovare* by Elaine O'Rourke

While The Divine Conspiracy and Renovation of the Heart are Dallas' most well-known and expansive books, Hearing God is my favorite. To my ears it is Dallas' most personal book, tender and intelligent like the man himself. In it, Dallas declares that God does indeed speak with His children. He explains the nature and acquisition of a conversational relationship with God, focusing attention at one point on distinguishing God's particular timbre from the cacophony of squawks and hisses inside our heads. In the passage (pages 31-35), Dallas gives some reasons that so many, fearing themselves deaf or God silent, have trouble noticing God's voice.

<https://renovare.org/articles/a-paradox-about-hearing-god>

Thank you and God bless you for venturing further up, further in the Kingdom Among Us. We trust you have had a fresh hearing of Jesus and your divine hearing has improved. May your quietly transforming, conversational friendship with God immersed in the Trinitarian community be pervaded with joy, relaxed with shalom, and filled with agape, as you not only hear God and His guidance for your life, but become the kind of apprentice of Jesus who willfully seeks the good of God, others and yourself.

For more resources to follow Jesus with Willard's wise, warm, winsome teaching:

[Dallas Willard Ministries](#)

[Jesus College](#)

[HarperCollins](#)

The Study Guide work was prepared by Doug Webster of Jesus College. We welcome your comments, suggestions and ideas on how we might better help you strengthen your conversational apprenticeship with Jesus in the With-God life..

info@JesusCollege.com



JESUS COLLEGE

A good school