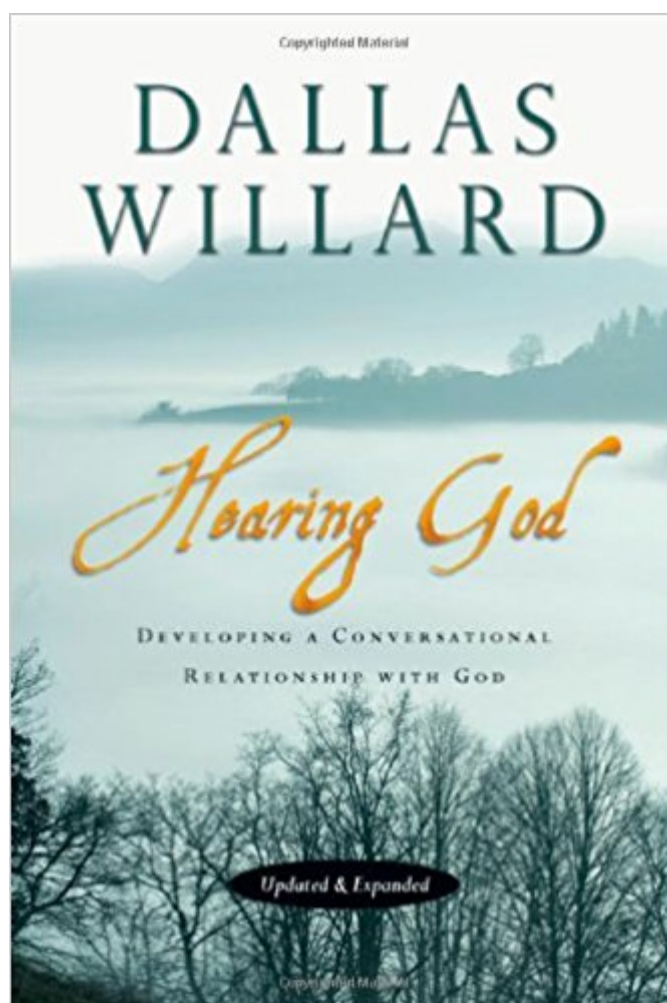


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Hearing God: Developing A Conversational Relationship With God



Synopsis

"God spoke to me." "The Spirit spoke to my heart." "God revealed the idea to me." Being close to God means communicating with him--telling him what is on our hearts in prayer and hearing and understanding what he is saying to us. It is this second half of our conversation with God that is so important but that can also be so difficult. How do we hear his voice? How can we be sure that what we think we hear is not our own subconscious? What role does the Bible play? What if what God says to us is not clear? The key, says best-selling author Dallas Willard, is to focus not so much on individual actions and decisions as on building our personal relationship with our Creator. In this updated and expanded edition of Willard's beloved book, originally published as *In Search of Guidance*, you'll gain rich spiritual insight into how we can hear God's voice clearly and develop an intimate partnership with him in the work of his kingdom. Including new material from Dallas Willard's teaching at the Renovar[®] Institute and reformatted to be even easier to read, this classic continues to endure as one of today's best resources for learning to listen closely to God.

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Customer Reviews

"The beauty of this book is the way it exposes the reader to hearing God through obedience to him. . . . You may need, as I did, to read and read it again, but it is well worth it." (Skip Holman, Baptist Standard, September 3, 2012)"In this volume he lays out a needed and balanced view of a God who not only listens to his children but speaks to them as well. The problem is not that God is voiceless but that we simply do not listen to his voice and that is because we don't know how to listen." (Jim Miller Book Review, January 23, 2008)"Few books have challenged me like this one. I

would urge every serious-minded Christian to read it . . . at your own risk." (Bill Hybels, author of *Too Busy Not to Pray*) "The best book on divine guidance I have ever read. I recommend it highly." (Richard Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline*) "Willard wonderfully encourages us to listen for God's voice, and then to respond and obey. This is a book of great encouragement and helpful insights into the arena of God's direction in our daily living." (Ted W. Engstrom, president emeritus, World Vision)

Dallas Willard (1935-2013) was a professor in the School of Philosophy at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles for over forty years. A highly influential author and teacher, Willard was as celebrated for his enduring writings on spiritual formation as he was for his scholarship. His books include *The Divine Conspiracy* (Christianity Today's Book of the Year in 1998), *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, *Hearing God*, *Renovation of the Heart* and others. His books have received numerous Christianity Today Annual Book Awards and other recognitions. Willard served on the boards of the C. S. Lewis Foundation and Biola University, and was a member of numerous evaluation committees for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. He received bachelor's degrees from both Tennessee Temple College and Baylor University and a graduate degree at Baylor University, as well as a PhD from the University of Wisconsin in Philosophy and the History of Science.

This is the first of this author's books that I have read though I've heard him quoted by many authors that I respect. His presentation of the normal Christian life is profound in that it connects so many spiritual principles/dots together. Yet, he does it in a way that makes it seem very simple and straightforward. I have been enjoying a conversational relationship with God that comes and goes in bursts. This had puzzled me until now. If you are not a disciple of Jesus Christ this book will not make much sense. If you are and you are a student of the Bible this book will form an intense calling to you to find the life that God wants with you.

Originally published on my blog [...] Finding God's will is a common desire. Often people can be paralyzed because they are afraid of not finding God's will. *Hearing God* is a classic. This is the third copy of the book I have owned (one given and two purchased) over the years but the first time I am actually reading it. I like that Willard starts by moving the pressure down a notch. He has a good illustration of the fact that no parent wants to tell their children everything that they should do. Parents want to teach their children how to do something, and expect that they will do it. If they are

supposed to make their bed in the morning, they should make it every morning. Children complaining that the parent did not tell them this morning to make their bed will only incur the parent's wrath. So Willard starts telling us we should listen to what scripture says and do that. Another good point that I have never really thought of, is that we should always read scripture assuming that the people of scripture were much like us. They were not particularly special people, they were sinful, afraid, made bad decisions, etc. If we see them as much like us, then we can assume that we should be hearing from God and seeking to follow God's will in relatively similar ways as the biblical characters. Since reading that section, I have been more aware of the large number of Christians that actively resist thinking of biblical characters as 'like us'. I think it shows one area that we have far to go to move Evangelicals into historical Christian Orthodoxy. There is a good illustration about what it means to live in Christ and hear from the Holy Spirit. My shortened, weakened version is that Cabbage is alive. But Cabbage is dead to the world of movement and play. A rabbit might be able to move and play in some form, but it is dead to the world of art and ideas. It is not that Christians that do not hear from the spirit are dead in Christ (not saved), but rather are some are blinded to the plane that the Holy Spirit is speaking to them on. He spends several pages developing it and it is much more impressive than my few lines makes it seem. Overall what I am most impressed by, is the biblical balance that Willard attempts to strike. When you discuss hearing from God there are lots of places to veer into shaky ground. And I know that some are of the opinion that even discussing hearing from God goes too far. But Willard attempts to keep the desire to hear from God, the ways we hear from God, the reality of the power of God, and the limitations of our own understanding all front and center. This is not a new book, but I think it would be good to read along with Bill Hybels' *Power of a Whisper*. Hybels spends more time talking biographically (and telling other people's stories), which I think is helpful to put hearing from God in context of a life lived. And Hybels probably is a bit more directive in how to hear from God. But Willard is more theologically and philosophically oriented. I think the balance between them is useful.

This book not only delivered on its promise to help me further develop a conversational relationship with God, but it also surprised me by helping me to gain a much healthier perspective of the Bible.

I found this book a little hard to stay with at times. I really had to push through a lot of it. A little too wordy for me. I am more of a get to the point kind of person and the first few chapters that emphasize the fact that God does speak today I was eager to get through since I already believe

that and didn't need that foundation laid. I enjoy reading various books/teaching on hearing God's voice because he speaks in various ways and it's interesting to hear the various teachings and experiences from seasoned Christian teachers. If I can take something new away from it it's worth it to me. With that said I did take a couple things away from this book that made it worth it. All in all if you are new to hearing God's voice, or are not sure what you think about it, you will probably like this book.

I've been a pastor for 10 years and have had some experience with some of the things Willard expounds in these pages, but opening up and reading this book is an arctic blast of gale force fresh air. As with "The Divine Conspiracy," Willard does not waste a single word in this tome. Nothing is superfluous here as the most important reality of a person's life is discussed: having ongoing, conversational relationship with God. Almost every page of my copy has several things underlined. I'm just going to have to read it again with a highlighter in hand this time. Oh darn. If you feel your life is stale and doesn't amount to much, please, please, please get this book and read it. I kid you not, there are things here that will change your view on life and faith. The brilliance and authority of Willard rests in the fact that he was a man who had a real relationship with Jesus and that he turns to not instructs us to do as he has done, but he actually explains the WHY and HOW. There are deep, Spirit-empowered realities in this book. Are you on the fence about getting this book? Don't be. Get it. Now. I'm not kidding.

Hard not to give proper credit to Dallas Willard. As always, those that put the effort and apply themselves to understand what Dallas presents here reap a harvest of profound truth and understandings. Not for light reading, but for discipleship learning. The true sheep know and hear The Good Shepherd's voice.

At first I had to get acclimated to his writing style, since it was different from most books I've read. Going through with a red pen and underlining the main points had helped my understanding immensely. Overall there is sound logic in this discussion of faith, and much of his claims are biblically-based using the stories of the bible as evidence for a personal, involved God. This book will definitely help grow your faith and mature it like a fine wine. For anyone struggling with the phenomena of hearing God's voice, this book will help clarify things. There is even *lectio divina* scattered throughout the chapters. Places of reading of the Word and reflection to help your soul process the information. I highly recommend this book.

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