

Florida Forward Communications

A equipping initiative of Florida Ministries.
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Equipping pastors to equip leaders for life.
Encounter & Encourage, Equip & Empower



PASTOR

NOTE THE FOLLOWING EVENTS PLANNED FOR
JULY - DECEMBER

JULY

- 🔥 International Presbytery Meeting: July 16-19 – Oklahoma City, OK
- 🔥 International Assembly: July 20-24 – Oklahoma City, OK

AUGUST

🔥 Pastors ZOOM Discussion Options: August 2

- 10:00 am or 6:00 pm – The content of this document will be discussed.
- 🔥 Ministerial Review Team Meeting: August 13 (Zoom)
- 🔥 Men's Retreat: August 26-27 – Camp Sonshine

SEPTEMBER

- 🔥 Central Regional Relational Center: September 10 – Winter Garden, (Southside)
- 🔥 North American Pastor's Conference: September 21-23 – Cleveland, TN

OCTOBER

- 🔥 North Central Regional Relational Center: October 1 – Daytona
- 🔥 South Regional Relational Center: October 8 – Miami #1
- 🔥 North West Regional Relational Center: October 14/15 – Panama City, (Grace Fellowship)
- 🔥 Presiding Bishop/General Presbyter & Assembly Committee Meetings: October 17-21 – Cleveland, TN
- 🔥 North American Bishops Meeting: October 23-26 – Cleveland, TN

NOVEMBER

- 🔥 South Central Regional Relational Center: November 12 – Arcadia
- 🔥 Thanksgiving: November 24

DECEMBER

- 🔥 Florida Ministries Christmas Gathering: December 3
- 🔥 Christmas: December 25





READING YOUR BIBLE RELATIONALLY

BY LANCE WITT

Replenish Ministries

Growing in knowledge is important, but knowledge without relationship is dangerous. That was one of the big issues Jesus had with the Pharisees. They had biblical knowledge but their heart was far from God.

Scripture: Hebrews 4:12 – One of the temptations for pastors is to engage the Bible only for sermon preparation. Because we preach most every week, we are always looking for fresh content for our preaching. As a result, one of the challenges for pastors is reading the Bible personally as a Christian rather than simply reading it as a pastor looking for sermon material.

Today, I want to share a practice with you that has been very helpful in my journey. First, let me give you a little background. I grew up in a Christian home where the Word of God was loved and studied. There was great respect for God's Word. And to this day I believe that the Bible is inspired, infallible, and inerrant.

And most of my life, I have approached the Bible informationally, not relationally. When I approach the Bible informationally, my goal is to elevate my knowledge. But when I approach the Bible relationally, my goal is to elevate my affection and love for God.

Growing in knowledge is important, but knowledge without relationship is dangerous. That was one of the big issues Jesus had with the Pharisees. They had biblical knowledge but their heart was far from God.

In recent years, when I sit down with my Bible, I try to remind myself that this is not just a book with great truth and accurate information. Behind the book, is a personal God. I am meeting with the God of the universe, not



just reading a book. And he wants a relationship with me, which makes the Bible different than any other book ever written.

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)

"For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires."

The Word of God is alive and powerful because God is at work in it and through it. He energizes His Word and applies it to my life.

So, before I start reading Scripture, I usually start with a simple prayer... "Lord, today I want to meet with you and I want to deepen my relationship with you. So, speak to me. I am listening." I am reminding myself to read the bible relationally, not just informationally. As a pastor, my default mode is to come to the Bible looking for truth that I can use in a sermon. The irony is that I can come to the Bible looking for truth and actually be disconnected relationally from the truth-giver.

There is an old story about a group of at a dinner gathering. At the dinner was a well known orator. That night he was asked to recite the 23rd Psalm. He masterfully recited that most well known of Psalms and everyone in the room was impressed. There was also an older pastor there that night and someone asked him if he would also recite the 23rd Psalm. But instead of the people being impressed, they were moved. Afterward, someone commented, the orator knew the Psalm and the pastor knew the shepherd.

I don't want to be a pastor who simply knows the psalm. I want to deeply know the shepherd.

When my wife and I started dating 40 years ago, we were in college. The problem was that we lived 600 miles apart. And, it was before the days of cell phones, e-mail, and text messaging. We were poor college students but we were in love and had a deep desire to connect with each other.

So, we worked out a plan. We would do all we could to see each other once a month. Then, we would call each other once a week. That was all we could afford. But, every single day we wrote a personal letter. For over



a year, every day I wrote a letter to Connie and she wrote a letter to me. I was the envy of all the guys in my dorm because I received a love letter every single day.

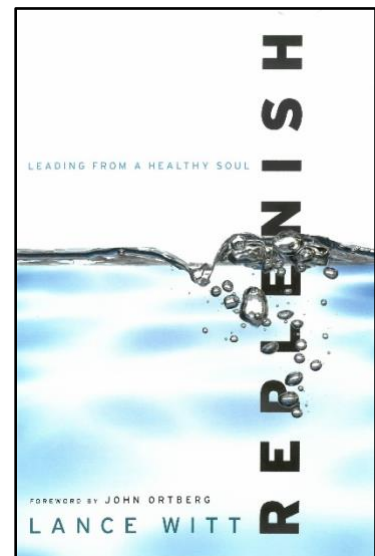
When I would go to my mailbox each day and pull out that letter, I want to tell you that I never read them informationally. I always read them relationally. I never did a greek word study from her letters. I never created an outline for teaching. I knew that behind those words on the page was a person that loved me and that I was in relationship with.

That's how I want to read the Bible. So, in all your efforts to grow your church and preach great sermons, don't forget to pursue a love relationship with God. I suspect there are some of us who need to return to our first love. We need to be reminded that our first priority is the Great Commandment before the Great Commission.

A minister once asked Mother Teresa how to best live out his calling... "spend one hour a day in adoration of your Lord and never do anything you know is wrong, and you will be all right." This week may you grow in adoration of the Lord Jesus.



Lance is the founder of Replenish ministries and is often referred to as a Pastor's Pastor. He is also the author of the book Replenish, which is dedicated to helping leaders live and lead from a healthy soul. Before launching Replenish, Lance served 20 years as a senior pastor and 6 years as an Executive/Teaching pastor at Saddleback Church.





3 KEYS TO OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO BIBLE ENGAGEMENT IN THE CHURCH

By Paul Caminiti

In North America, we have more Bibles than ever, but less and less real engagement. Why?

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:12-21

“Do you know what your problem is?” the business consultant we had hired asked me. “You’re lazy.”

At the time, I was running a successful Bible division for a well-known publishing company. Before that, I had been a pastor for 15 years. “Lazy” was not one of the words I would have chosen to describe myself.

“You’re not lazy when it comes to creating and selling more Bibles,” the consultant continued. “But what are you doing to help people engage their Bibles once the cash register has rung?”

I didn’t have a good answer.

Like many in the church, I had come to assume that if we simply got the Scriptures out there—that if we translated, published, and sold enough Bibles—then we’d done our job. God would take it from there.

Since then, I’ve learned the unvarnished reality: in North America, we have more Bibles than ever, but less and less real engagement.

Bibles, Bibles Everywhere

Americans buy 25 million new Bibles every year—and that’s not counting the millions that are given away by churches, Bible societies, and other ministries. The Bible is not only the best-selling book of all time; it’s the best-selling book every single year!

Equipping pastors to equip readers for life



Yet we all know that the incidence of Bible reading is going down, not up. In the last few decades, one in five Bible readers has given up on Scripture. Today, twice as many people think the Bible is a fairy tale as did when I started in ministry.

The problem isn't just outside the church, either. Willow Creek's groundbreaking REVEAL study uncovered a surprising hunger for God's Word among our congregations: 87 percent of churchgoers identified in-depth Bible study as "very" or "critically" important. No other spiritual need scored this highly.

But the REVEAL study also contained more sobering news: Only one in five churchgoers says their church offers in-depth Bible engagement.

For me, there is a compelling sense of opportunity and urgency in these numbers. As the authors of the REVEAL study concluded, "The Bible is the most powerful catalyst for spiritual growth. [Its] power to advance spiritual growth is unrivaled by anything else we've discovered."

But how many of us have figured out how to unleash this power in our church communities? And if we don't find a way to better Bible engagement, how much longer before our parishioners start looking outside the church for spiritual direction?

This question prompted a two-year journey at Biblica (formerly International Bible Society). For more than two centuries now, we've translated and distributed Bibles all over the world. We've been privileged to serve as stewards of the NIV, the most widely read contemporary English version of the Bible.

But we've come to realize that translating, publishing, and distributing Bibles—while important— isn't enough. It's not good enough to ask, "Do people have the Bible?" We also have to ask, "What kind of experience are they having with the Bible?"

Three Barriers to Engagement

Today, it's safe to say that our congregants' Bible experience isn't always everything it could be. What's getting in the way of meaningful engagement? I propose the existence of three barriers:



1. ***Too many of us read Scripture in fragments.***

From topical reference Bibles to verse-of-the-day emails, we tend to parcel Scripture into bite-sized fragments. Even the modern verse divisions in our Bibles—which weren’t added until the mid-1500s—encourage fragmented reading. We’ve made the Bible feel more like a reference book than a story.

For the most part, biblical books were meant to be read as whole units, from beginning to end. Yet if we engage the Bible at all, we’re more likely to do so in a verse here or a chapter there. We’ve refashioned God’s Word in the image of our sound-bite culture; as a result, readers can lose sight of the bigger story.

2. ***Too many of us read Scripture without a sense of context.***

We all know the Bible is an ancient book written by ancient scribes. We all know it’s the product of a world vastly different from our own. But if we are to discover the Bible’s implications for our lives today, we have to bridge the gap between its world and ours.

Let’s face it—that’s easier said than done. More often than not, we’ve soft-pedaled the Bible’s foreignness. We haven’t fully come to grips with the reality that the Bible was written *for* us, but not directly *to* us. In the words of N.T. Wright, we have to learn to read it “with first-century eyes.”

3. ***Too many of us read Scripture in isolation.***

Many treat Bible reading mainly as a private discipline. We have private devotions and personal quiet times. We’ve been taught to ask questions like, “How does this verse apply *to me*?”

Personal Bible study is a wonderful thing. But in prioritizing individual experience over that within the community, we may have been unwittingly influenced by our Western, me-centric culture—more so than we care to admit.

The Bible was originally the product of a very different mindset. Its books were written, first and foremost, to whole communities. They were composed, for the most part, to be read during public gatherings. Think of the many times Israel assembled to listen to the



Law—or when Paul instructed that his letters be read aloud to the entire local church.

We need a Bible experience that doesn't just begin and end with "me."

Three Cs of Engagement

These barriers to engagement are not inconsequential. But I believe they can be overcome by focusing on the three Cs of engagement:

The complete Bible

For starters, we need to clear away some of the clutter that's collected around the Bible. Study notes, cross-references, and verse numbers have a role to play, but let's be honest about the fact that they encourage us to read in fragments rather than whole books. We need a panoramic view of the entire story.

Understood in context.

Before we can ask (much less answer) the question, "What does this passage mean to me?" we need to ask, "What did it mean to the original audience?" We need to go back in time and step into the world of the Bible's writers and recipients.

Experienced in community.

Recovery movements understand what many of us in the church have missed: Great undertakings are far more likely to succeed when they are group efforts. Smokers, for example, are six times more likely to quit if they are part of a support group.

Bible engagement is no easy task, so individuals shouldn't be left to go it alone. Our Bible experiences will be richer and more meaningful when we share them with the whole community of faith.





Paul Caminiti leads Biblica's initiative to develop innovative Bible engagement experiences for the 21st-century church. Previously, Paul was vice president and publisher for Bibles at Zondervan, where he led the development of award-winning titles such as the *Archaeological Study Bible* and *The Bible Experience*. Prior to his time at Zondervan, Paul served as a pastor for 15 years. A leading spokesperson on Bible engagement, Paul has been featured on *NBC News* and the *Fox News Channel* as well as in *The New York Times*, *USA*

Today, and *Newsweek*.

NEXTSTEPS

ENCOUNTER | ENCOURAGE | EQUIP | EMPOWER



My Discussion Points



[illegible]

GOOD *Speaks*

“Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth.”
1 Samuel 3:9 KJV



The following is a compilation of devotions prepared by the pastors wives of the Church of God of Prophecy, State of Florida. The devotions are based on the theme "*God Speaks*" and derived from the Word of God in 1 Samuel 3:9.

Day 1

In the past few months, I've challenged myself to slow down, reduce distractions and be intentional about hearing the voice of my Father. I'm convinced above all that I'm HIS favorite child ... so I'm convinced that HE has things that HE wants to say to me.

I'm beginning to learn however, that not all distractions are bad... they are just things or people that interrupt (intentionally and unintentionally) our process of being attentive listeners. This means that deciphering which to eliminate and which to keep isn't always easy. This makes it critical that:

- (1) We know the voice of the Holy Spirit
- (2) We are confident that the Holy Spirit speaks and that He speaks to us.
- (3) We are willing and ready to follow His voice.

Lastly, I'm learning that until I'm 100 on identifying His voice, I may make mistakes or missteps...and that's okay... I must reassure myself that mistakes or missteps are okay AS LONG AS I don't stop listening and doing!! Once our hearts are locked in on following His voice... He won't allow our mistakes or missteps to destroy us... He loves us too much!!

Have a great week as you intentionally listen for the voice of your Father.

Romeika Ferguson-Adderley
Tampa – Forest Hills COGOP

Day 2

God created us so that we would know and experience his love for us. We all long to feel His love and to experience it as well. He did not created you and I to memorize just doctrines or Spiritual disciplines.

"I don't know about you my sisters, but I have days when God's love for me just presses in on my heart and overwhelms me. " That's how it is when we experience his love, we aren't given new information to understand, but new eyes to SEE.

Blessing.

Ivencia Etienne

Bradenton - Haitian COGOP

Reflection:

Day 3

In the beginning; God Spoke!

He said, “let there be...” And just like that , ...There was. The universe and everything in it was created.

How awesome was that that? Pretty cool if you ask me. What is even more fascinating is that God is still speaking now. He is speaking to anyone who will listen to his voice above the noise worries, cares. To do list and chaos.

In this month of Mental health awareness, how wonderful to know that the God who spoke the universe into existence desires to have conversations with us.

So why not be STILL long enough to LISTEN. John 10 :27, My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me.”

After all:

It is his voice that makes the difference

It is his voice that brings deliverance

It is his voice that heals

It is his voice that gives direction

So, today I say like Samuel, “speak Lord, your servant is listening. Much love my beautiful Sisters !

Amiel Miller

Minneola - Faith Outreach Ministry, COGOP

Day 4

Woman was created and gifted to man as a helper. The Holy Spirit was gifted to every Jesus follower as THE Helper. In that way, women's roles are similar to the role of the Holy Spirit. He is a clear example that we can follow.

I find it extremely amazing, refreshing even, Holy Spirit only spoke what He heard Jesus and the Father say...in John 16:12-13, Jesus assures us, "I have many things to say to you...when the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He WILL NOT SPEAK ON HIS OWN, but WHATEVER HE HEARS He will speak; and He will tell you..."

Ladies, we only have ONE VOICE talking TO us...the rest of those voices are only talking AT us. And just as the Holy Spirit has shown us, we are never at a loss for words if we are repeating what we hear from that One Voice. I don't know about you, but many times when I am asked to share a word, I can tend to freak out a little (or a lot!). But that's when I have to remind myself, I'm simply repeating what God my Father has already said. He has already said it and now I have been given the authority and power to repeat it.

Speak Lord, we are listening to Your One Voice. Let our ears be fully awake and hungry to hear, so that our tongues may be fully instructed to repeat...

Blessings beautiful Ladies and happy hearing

Annette Reyome Mirelez
Daytona Beach FL - New Life Worship Center

Day 5

Shhh... do you hear that?

Sometimes when we want to hear from the Lord, silence is the loudest thing we hear!

We must reconcile that this too is God speaking.

If I hear no direction, then I am to remain right where I am, as I am.

When we hear nothing, we are to do nothing but be still, and know, know what? that He is God and we have His promises.

We have His promise to hear a word behind us, Isaiah 30:21

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

God doesn't speak just to talk, Proverbs 25:11

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

He wants to speak when that word will fit and not be discarded or overlooked.

People say silence is golden, and it is, if we are in the knowing!!

If we know Him, then most likely we know how He is going to answer us.. rarely is the thing He speaks different from what we are expecting.

People ask me often if we can do this or do that, I usually don't have to go running to my husband Dan and ask him what he thinks, I usually know what he would say....per the question. Why? How? Because I know Him....

God is our covenant partner, what you long to hear, He longs to say, and I believe It is by His design I need to hear Him so bad, in other words my wait for Him to speak is my preparation for those words to fit!

So while I may be on hold, tempted to just hang up, I will reap in due time if I wont faint, (give up) and I must know Him enough to know we are not disconnected! While I wait for a spoken word, I read the written word!

Elaine Love
Punta Gorda COGOP

Day 6

It was a sunny Sunday afternoon shortly after Larry's passing that I was sitting on my lanai having lunch and enjoying the sunny day. When out of nowhere a sudden feeling of loneliness swept over me like a looming shadow and it hit me, I was all alone. Then all of a sudden, I looked up in the sky and a plane had written the words "JESUS LOVES YOU 😊" with a smiley face!!! Immediately I felt the sadness lifted and began thanking God for giving me such a sweet sign. (Larry was a pilot and how appropriate that God used a plane to remind me that I am loved.) He not only loves us but teaches us how to share that love with others!

Be loved today 💖

Frankie Dotson
Florida First Lady Emeritus

Reflection:

Day 7

God Speaks to us in many ways...some we notice and some we seem to pass over, never the less, God still Speaks to us. I am reminded of the passage of scripture found in Psalms 61:1-3 " Hear my cry, o God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to that rock that is higher than I. For thou has been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy."

There have been a number of times in my life that I wasted precious moments wondering why God was not speaking to me in my pain, hurt, misunderstanding, hardships and time of testing, when God was speaking or had spoken and I had not paid attention (really listened) to him. God loves me and has never left me alone, I have no reason to ever doubt his tender loving mercy. My lack of "active faith" does not negate God's care for me.

God has been so faithful to speak in visions, dreams, through our conscience, through his Word, through his wonderful work that we see everyday, what an awesome God we serve. Just to behold the beauty of salvation and to share the love of God with others is God speaking. Just to celebrate, mourn, rejoice all our senses are truly witness to God speaking. Whether we move or don't move God is speaking into someone's situation or circumstance. What a blessing for us to be privileged to know he is totally invested in us, both hearing us as in Psalms 61 and speaking to us through His Spirit or whatever way he chooses...I pray we listen!

Hazel Williams
Orlando – Orange City Worship Center COGOP

Day 8

I have been doing a Bible study for the last few months that has been so rich in this very topic. It is Discerning the Voice of God by Priscilla Shirer. I encourage you to get it if you haven't already.

Perhaps like me, you have at some point spent time not hearing His voice or at least not recognizing it. You have read in the Bible where He had spoken to them and even know ones He has spoke to today. I know what it is like to hear nothing but silence after praying for situations. I finally realized that it wasn't that He wasn't speaking but more about my heart posture and listening. So with all confidence I can assure you that He does speak! The Bible says in Hebrews 13:8 that God is the same yesterday, today and forever. Meaning that the same God who spoke to the prophets of old will still speak to His saints today. There is a difference between listening and hearing. Listening is an internal behavior that involves both the mind and body, whereas hearing is a physical act that only involves the ears. What does your heart posture look like when listening for the voice of God?

Reflection:

Charity Martinez
Moore Haven COGOP

Day 9

It was several months ago that I was pouring out my heart to God in desperation concerning a situation at my workplace. I couldn't understand why I wasn't hearing from God concerning my plea for an answer. I was allowing it to consume me, and I needed peace. I'm just being honest. I know He hears me because his word says, "When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles" (Psalm 34:17). Lord, I'm your daughter! Why am I not hearing from you?

My husband Maxie tells me that I "sometimes" have this "teeny-weeny" little problem that when I'm excited about something, I tend to not let him (or whoever) finish before I'm talking again ...well.... As the comedian Bill Engvall would say: Here's Your Sign, or should I say, MY SIGN. That's my problem! I was doing all the talking and none of the listening. A portion of Psalms 37:7 says, "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him". I needed to wait quietly.

My prayer changed to simply...God speak to me, I am listening. I remember it so vividly. It was a Friday morning at my desk. I sat there looking out the window as if I was waiting on a phone call or for someone to show up at the door. Someone did show up!!! It was God speaking his word to me through another co-worker. All this time they were only two offices down and they had the nugget I needed for confirmation.

There is "A time to keep silent, and a time to speak" (Ecclesiastes 3:7). Being quiet can be a struggle, but it can also be a good virtue to have when you want to hear God Speak.

Teresa Beauchamp
Panama City - COGOP

Day 10

God speaks to us in many ways.

Through His still, small voice inside our hearts.

Through the rhema word of God.

Through a sense of peace.

Through open and closed doors.

Through other people.

When God speaks to us, He wants us to pay attention. Sometimes we are so busy with the cares of life, we can't hear Him speaking to us.

My mind goes back to when Jesus spoke to me through His word. I was eleven years old. The evangelist was preaching, one of his scriptures was taken from Mark 8:36. For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? That scripture ministered to my spirit and I went down to an old fashion alter and surrendered my life to Jesus. Let us be mindful of when God is speaking to us.

Reflection:

Judy Ferguson

Tamarac – Eagle's Wings COGOP

Day 11

God Speaks

The OT and NT scriptures are replete with instances of God speaking to His people.

In Genesis 2: 16-17 God spoke with Adam in the Garden of Eden. He spoke with Noah to build an ark for the saving of his family and the animals. Genesis 6: 13-21

God spoke with Abram in Genesis 12: 1-3 and made him great promises. In Exodus 3:4-14 He spoke with Moses and sent him to deliver His people out of Egypt from Pharaoh's bondage.

St Luke 1:13-20 and Luke 1:26-35 He spoke with Zacharias about the birth of John the Baptist and to Mary about the birth of the Christ Child.

In all these examples God spoke with a purpose. His purpose was to engage His servants in carrying out His will and His work in the earth.

God still speaks today. He wants to engage us in His work in the world as well.

I humbly share one of my personal experiences with God speaking to me. On Jan. 1, 2001 He spoke these words to me "Go to Grow." After much prayer and searching for His will, in Jan.2002 Hugh and I left our home, career and church family of 19 years in Miami to Orlando. We were not clear on what we were to do there.

However, God continued to speak which led us to the founding of Restoration Center Ministries COGOP and the building of a worship center. It was so scary at times to obey God's voice because of fear of failure. But I will never forget what He said to me one Tuesday at the beginning of the process. Three times He said "You will never fail. If you will remember that mine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory. You will never fail." Oh, how He has been faithful to His words.

My sisters may we have sensitive listening ears and hearts to hear Him speak and may we be willing to obey when He speaks.

Rona Palmer
Orlando – Restoration Center COGOP

Day 12

My son Caleb has special needs and I have homeschooled him for the past six years, so we spend a lot of time together. He is quite the talker so we have lots of conversations together about numerous things (from his ideas, his goals, or things he wants to do today). Many times he's talking and he usually follows up with, "Mom, do you hear me?" He just wants to make sure I'm paying attention. Am I really listening?

This made me wonder if sometimes God speaks to us and follows up with the same question, 'Do you hear me?' Are we listening or are we just merely hearing him? Hearing doesn't really require us to do anything on our part but listening requires paying attention and focusing on what is being spoken. Taking time to understand what He's saying. In Luke 10:38-42, we read where Jesus came to the home of Martha and Mary. Martha was busy and distracted with all her responsibilities that she thought needed to be done (her to-do list). She let those things prevent her from sitting in His presence. Do we ever get so caught up in our daily tasks (running the household, taking care of the kids, or serving) that we fail to make time for sitting at His feet? (I know sometimes I'm guilty).

But on other hand Mary sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teachings. Jesus said that only one thing is necessary and Mary had chosen the good part. Our most important priority is sitting at the feet of Jesus. If we realize this, everything else will fall into place.

Year after year, the more I sat with Caleb it was easier to decipher his needs, wants, and goals at times without even speaking. In the same way our relationship with Jesus is strengthened by spending more time with Him. Because that's His desire: relationship. For us to know Him more. The more time we spend with Him the more we come to know and recognize His voice. We all could use a little more time listening at His feet.

Do you hear me?

Blessings to you all!

Angela Brisson Dominguez
Apopka COGOP

Day 13

God Speaks.....

But are we listening? God speaks to us in so many ways. He spoke to Moses through the burning bush, he spoke to the winds and the waves and they ceased their turmoil, he spoke to Balaam through the donkey. The key here is are we listening. Have we taken the time to be still and mediate in His word and listen for that still small voice, or are we so busy with the doing that we have forgotten to just be still and listen? Meditate on Him and His word and he will speak. He will direct, comfort and give you strength for all you need.

Isaiah 40:31 says

“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

Dear Lord teach us to wait. God bless you all.

Pam Grundy
Jacksonville - Mandarin COGOP

Reflection:

Day 14

STOP....He wants our attention.

LISTEN....His still (staying put) sometimes soft/strong voice is always there.

FOCUS.....He always has a message the way you need it.

A few week ago, March the 16th, I had a medical test which elevated my anxiety attacks that I have been frequently having since my bad case of covid.

I had these test before and they were so painful as if in a nightmare you can't wake up. The morning of my test, my old curling iron caught my hair on fire, which made my anxiety elevate to the mode of panic, feeling totally alone and scared of what I was dealing with. Not having my husband to support me with encouragement was bringing more emptiness and distress.

Knowing who God has been in my life was overpowered by these---burning my hair that I am so particular with and having the pain of an awful test. I prayed to God but that was just that a prayer of just words. Was I really talking with Him or just through my fear?

I got in my car, shaking, wondering why God? As I always love to do being a nature lover, looking at all God's beautiful picture of creation around me as I always do, I heard "STOP, what do you really want?" Looking around no one was there I looked up and spoke loudly "PEACE, I just want PEACE:" All of a sudden, the biggest face of the most beautiful lion I have ever seen showed up in the clouds.

Spell bound I just sat there in my car and my mind began to focus on this is my LION OF JUDAH that overpowers my thoughts of anxiety, fear, traumaall attacking me with so much more, but in one moment I STOPPED-LISTENED-then FOCUSED. I drove and went into that test in perfect peace while getting the nurses laughing at my burnt hair story. One nurse spoke you brought so much to us today with all this calmness and laughter. They did a new procedure in that test, and I felt NO PAIN. We not only get what is needed through His voice and actions but others we come in contact with get from Him- through us -as well.

Not only did I received an environment of serenity, peace and gratitude that day but everyone I was with received it. It felt good hearing and seeing what God had given to me that they were touched as well. When the LION KING is around everyone takes notice.

Thank You Heavenly Father for being my LION KING....my LION of JUDAH! You have always been there for ME!

Satan may roar, but my defender is the Lion of Judah, and HE WILL fight for me....I need only be still. Exodus 14:14

Hope this is an inspiration to others that they will find their Lion King/Lion of Judah who takes care of them as well.

With all love and care

Barbara Lynn
Riviera Beach COGOP

Day 15

Mid-month reflection:

Have I made the time to be still and hear from God? If not, what has been the distraction? How do I release myself from the distractions?

What has God been saying to me?

How have I been hearing from God?

What will I commit to doing, to ensure that I position myself to hear from God?

Day 16

God is Omniscient (All-Knowing) -

Matthew 6:8b "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."

Psalms 139:1-4 "1. O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. 2. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off. 3. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. 4. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether."

Because God is Omniscient:

God SPEAKS to us in the WAY we need it. He uses His Scripture (the Bible, our devotions, Scriptures on social media, such as Facebook); His still small Voice; His presence; other people; answered prayers; nature; dreams and visions.

I had a knee replacement on my left knee almost 6 years ago, & it was not a good experience for me. Not something I ever want to go through again. For the past 6 months or so, I have had severe right heel and right knee pain. I had an appt with the orthopedic dr a few weeks ago, & I just knew they were going to tell me I needed a knee replacement. I was so stressed out, nervous, worried about the appt, and dwelling on my previous experience, that I lost sleep over it in the days leading up to the appt. At night, as I was mindlessly scrolling on Facebook, post after post came up with Scriptures to "Trust in God", "My grace is sufficient for you". My devotions on my YouVersion app on my phone reminded me to trust in God and not to worry. I took a deep breath, said ok God, I trust You, put on my soft worship music, and I went to sleep. Yes, they said I need a knee replacement.

Day 16 part 2

But I am not worried about it anymore. Why? Because my Father SPOKE to me. I am placing it in God's hands. - And of course, I'm still praying for complete healing!

God SPEAKS to us WHEN we need it.

This past weekend, my family met my parents for dinner to celebrate Mother's Day. We ate outside at the restaurant. I didn't realize just how hot it was outside until we got up to leave, and I felt overheated and I thought I was going to pass out. My mom placed her hand on me and prayed for me. Within minutes I felt completely better. God communicated to me how much He loves me by touching my body.

God SPEAKS to us WHERE we need it.

A group from our church went to a Christian concert last week to hear 3 different Christian singing groups, & we heard testimonies from 2 of the groups about God speaking to them or a loved one in their car. Matthew West told about how, right as the pandemic started and things were shutting down, he cried out to God, asking Him where He was, why was He allowing this, and he immediately heard his own song on the radio. He said he was literally singing to himself on the radio God's answer to the prayer he had just prayed. God SPOKE peace to him. The group Cain told about how one of their unsaved alcoholic friends had cried out to God in her car, If You're real, show me. And immediately His presence filled her car. With tears streaming down her face, she pulled her car over and gave her heart to the Lord right there.

If you think God is not speaking to you, you're not listening! Yes, God Speaks! God Speaks!

Be blessed this week as you listen to our Heavenly Father.

Katy Hurlburt
Arcadia COGOP

Day 17

... the TRUTH:

Jesus responded to Pilate:

"I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice." John 18:37b

Jesus prayed for His disciples:

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." John 17:17

Jesus IS the TRUTH:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life." John 14:6

But what is the truth in the age we live in? In this postmodern world, Truth is what feels good, what looks good, what sounds good... Today the truth is relative to whatever people want it to be, disregarding the absolute TRUTH of God, which is consistent and works for all kinds of people, times, places, and cultures...

In a world of lies, aren't you glad to have the privilege of knowing the TRUTH? Glory!

God spoke the TRUTH to me when everything looked exactly the opposite of what He had promised me. He taught me to "walk by faith, not by sight". He reminded me to fix my eyes on Him, not on the temporary circumstances, to silence every voice, every lie of the enemy (lie: is a false statement, the opposite of the truth). Over twelve years ago, a day before Valentine's, my husband died suddenly. After five lonely Valentines, I was at work, and in my brokenness, I began to cry during a song that was playing on my desktop: "Dance With Me", (based on the Songs of Solomon, see video below) It says:

Day 17 part 2

"Won't You dance with me
oh, Lover of my soul
to the song of all songs?

Romance me
oh, Lover of my soul
to the song of all songs."

At that precise moment, God spoke into my loneliness...

He said: "Because you have delighted yourself in me... even dancing for me during your sorrow... and because you have intimately romanced with me the way I wanted you to... you are ready now, and I will release the Boaz you have been praying for."

After I clocked out, on my way home, I received a phone call....an invitation that initiated a relationship with my current husband. One year later, we both danced to that song at our wedding...

GOD definitely SPEAKS...

He says:

"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." Jeremiah 33:3

Who have you been calling lately? You have to call on Him, He has your answer, and He is always ready to respond... Persist my dear sister!!!

Silvia House
Sanford - Whole World Gospel Center COGOP

Day 18

I believe God speaks to us in many ways. Many times He speaks to me through scripture. I study and meditate on His written Word and the scripture becomes alive to me. God has also spoken to me many times through dreams. There has also been times when I have heard Him speak to me audibly.

The most difficult times for me though is when He appears to be silent. I then wonder if I am in place to hear Him, or if I am so distracted by other noises that I fail to hear Him. But then it could be that God even speaks when He is silent. I know this does not seem to make sense, but think about it. His silent speaking could also be a way to help us utilize our faith in trusting what He has already spoken. You know how your mom or dad would just look at you and say nothing. Their actions spoke louder than words. You knew what they expected of you. Although they never spoke a word, you knew enough of what they already spoke to apply their words.

This silent time is for us to utilize what we already know. It is a time to exercise faith. It's a time to bring to remembrance God's Word that was spoken previously.

This silence is what I have experienced these past few days as I visited my family member in the Intensive Care Unit waiting for God to respond to my prayers for healing. This reminded me of Job waiting for God to respond to his situation. I'm still waiting, but I know God will speak. Like in Job's situation, God's silence broke and God had the final say.

Recently, I received three emergency phone calls back to back regarding other family members. I felt like I was going to collapse from the blow of these calls, especially after I was already going through some difficult things. I could not withhold my tears. Yet, I was the one who was called upon for spiritual and moral support. I needed support myself

Day 18 part 2

I called a non-relative Christian friend and shared with her what was going on. Her first response was, "Wow!" However, God used her to speak words of comfort to me. She prayed that I would receive no more urgent calls that night. She also prayed that I would start receiving praise reports. On the following day, the praise reports started coming in. The Word of God spoken from her lips encouraged me. God's Word did not return void. God spoke through her to strengthen and to encourage me when I needed it most. In 1 Samuel 23:16 Johnathan strengthen David's hand in the Lord. He was a trusted friend that God had in place for David. I thank God for all of my trusted, praying friends.

The following days I spent visiting my love ones in the hospital. I prayed with them and shared God's Word with them. I even ministered to other hurting families in the ICU waiting room. God used me and others to speak life and healing to them.

One day, after visiting with one of my relatives on another floor, I got on the elevator to return to the ICU waiting room. There was a man that appeared to be a doctor or surgeon who was on the elevator with me. As I was about to get off of the elevator, I turned to the man and thanked him for helping the families in the hospital. I told him how much I appreciated him. He held the elevator opened for me to get off and responded, "Keep praying for the patients and the family members of the patients." How did he know I was doing this? I walked away nodding and somewhat puzzled. I did not realizing this man was still behind me as I walked away from the elevator. As I approached the end of the hall to make a right turn to get on another elevator, I noticed this same man. He had been walking behind me. When I looked up at him he said, "You have to take care of yourself first so that you can be able to help others." Then he went on his way.

Day 18 part 3

At the time, I did not know why he spoke these words to me; but, after this encounter, several days passed before I could return to the hospital. You see, my husband and I both contracted COVID. Thank the Lord we are both better now.

In 2 Kings 6:9, the man of God sent word to the king of Israel saying, “Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Arameans are coming down there.”

Again in 2 Kings 6:10, the king of Israel sent to the place about which the man of God had told him; thus he warned him, so that he guarded himself there, more than once or twice.

I do not know if this was a real person or an angelic figure that spoke to me. However, I believe God spoke through this person to encourage me to continue to pray for those who were in the hospital and to take care of myself. I often neglected myself, but still took care of the needs of others. This time I was warned. I was told I would not be able to help others if I didn’t take care of myself first. I took heed to the words spoken to me.

God does not speak for nothing. Whenever He speaks, take heed.

Gwendolyn Singleton
Quincy COGOP

Day 19

God speaks in many ways. He speaks to us in that still small voice, he speaks to us through his beautiful creations, he speaks and ministers to us when we worship him..... He speaks.

He loves to communicate with us.

I've noticed that when I worship him I feel his presence as though he brushes by me. I often open my eyes because I can literally feel him, and some part of me still hopes to get a glimpse of his beauty.

He speaks as I focus and meditate on him. I find that that when I purpose in my heart to worship him and sing praises to him he abides there with me closely.

God inhabits our praise... I was at our church worshiping and listening one Tuesday night and as I worshiped and laid on my face before Him, He began to speak clearly to my spirit. As He ministered to me and showed me His will and purposed for our ministry, my mind just couldn't figure out how on earth we were going to get to that place. As I wept in the presence of God, such peace and clarity came over me. I heard God Speak "Stay Faithful". It wasn't long after that I discovered what is now one of my favorite songs to hear, sing, and worship to.

"Goodness of God". The words ring out loud to my spirit, "All my Life you have been Faithful"! He called us to be Faithful and He is always Faithful to us.

He Speaks.....I'm so thankful that we have a Heavenly Father who speaks to us.....

Jennifer Hobbs

Crescent City - Abundant Life Ministries COGOP

Day 20

John 10:27

My Sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

God speaks to those of us who take the time to listen.

There are moments in my life that I just sit and say to God - I'm listening. Sometimes it seems that I hear nothing and at other times, I hear him clearly.

In my journey of life, I am endeavoring to learn to be still before God and to allow the still small voice of God to speak directly to my heart. God is growing me each day as I take the time to listen.

I remember not too long ago in my spirit; I heard my named called in an audible voice. This was so real to me that I answered, yes. I believe that God calls our name, just to see if we are listening to Him. That day I heard Him call my name. My heart's desire is to always hear God speaking to me. How comforting it is to hear the voice of God!

The most recent time that I sensed God speaking to my spirit was a few Wednesday nights ago. I had just left church and was sitting at a red light in the left-hand turn lane at a busy intersection. In my spirit, I just had this extra instinct that I needed to pay more attention to traffic. Once the light turned green, as I went to move forward, I sensed a need to hesitate. I looked up and the car in the turning lane directly across from me came straight across the intersection, instead of turning. If I had went forward and not hesitated as the Spirit of God spoke, I would have been in an accident. At that moment, I realized what happened and I had a good cry and thanked God for speaking to my heart and for His hand of protection.

I encourage everyone to listen for the voice of God, as He speaks to us.

Wendy Baggett
Palatka COGOP

Day 21

To the hearing impaired...

Do you ever find yourself at a place where His voice may not seem as clear as it once was? Do you find yourself asking God to speak a little louder?

While praying for an effective word for this Facebook thread, He spoke this to me. (Not a literal word but dropped a thought in my head) He questioned me: did I want a word from His heart or from my ego?

HUH?!

Things from His heart don't always cause me to shine in the light, as I would prefer. Let's face it, some of the things God spoke to the prophets of old, was usually something that made a person question their sanity. I'm just wondering, is the question whether we are hearing Gods voice, or whether we just aren't being obedient? 1 Samuel 15:22 reminds us, obedience is better than sacrifice, and to harken than the fat of rams. The Hebrew word for harken, means to "prick up the ear."

It does no good to listen if we aren't going to be obedient. After all we can hear him, and know it's his voice, but if we aren't obedient to his bidding, it is of no avail. We hear but lack understanding, because we are hearing impaired!

Maybe we should get our understanding out of the way. Just be obedient to his word. He doesn't need our spin on His word! Remember if it is His word, then it won't return void!

And in closing, if you are in a position where you can't hear Him clearly. Maybe you should move a little closer? It's hard to hear from the back of the room.

Janice Taylor
Auburndale – The Well COGOP

Day 22

He speaks to us through His promises. He speaks to us through a still small voice. He speaks to us through nature. He speaks to us in thunder. So many ways that I could list, but three and a half days ago He spoke a miraculous gift into our lives.

Our daughter, Shelby, does home births and our 8th grandbaby was born this Saturday at her home. Our little one entered the world as a stillborn. Before she emerged, the spirit-filled midwife knew something was very wrong. She told my daughter to start speaking life over her baby and my daughter's faith took over and she did.

Our baby emerged at 9:18 severely and tightly wrapped several times in the cord from neck to feet. Our little girl was born with no pulse, no breaths, no response, no reflex, and grey in color. She received 0's all the way down the Apgar scale. As the midwife started to get out the resuscitation kit, my daughter cradled her nonresponsive newborn to her chest and prayed through her tears. At 9:20, that stillborn baby took a breath, started to cry, and went from grey to pink in seconds before the midwife could even attempt any life saving measures. We watched her color change right before our eyes. Within 3 or 4 more minutes, the Apgar test was given again. Every zero was now registering as a 10...a perfect score. And continues to still.

The midwife testified that she had never witnessed a stillborn come back without human intervention.

I have zero doubt that at 9:20 pm, God called out her name and with that Miss Fynnley Sage Sheene caught her first breath and her heart began to beat out in answer to her Creator.

I write this with tears flowing down my cheeks and I can barely breathe taking in His goodness.

When God speaks, even death obeys!

Shellie Creasy
Palm Harbor – Crossroads Church COGOP

Day 23

EXPERIENCING GOD IS A PERSONAL MATTER

II Corinthians 1:4 - Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. (KJV)

We may each experience God in a different way. However, the most important thing is that we experience Him, His power, and the most exciting joy imaginable. God is a spirit, and He reveals Himself to us according to our faith. Sometimes, we feel as if God is not listening to us, and our prayers are for naught. Don't allow the enemy of your soul to deceive you in that way. Doubt and faith cannot dwell in the same place at the same time.

Some people say God talks to them through the Word, others say God speaks to them through others, and still others say they experience an overwhelming presence from Him that they cannot explain or put into words. For me, God speaks to me in the quietness of my mind. When I am meditating on Him in the lateness of the night, He ministers to me through my mind and drop His answers into my spirit. I know it is Him speaking to me because the joy I feel surpasses any normal feeling.

Just this Sunday I answered my husband telephone and the person on the other line told me they would not be in church. I said okay. As I hung up the phone, the Lord revealed to my spirit that I needed to pray for the person right then and there. He showed me that there was trouble brewing and I needed to call the person back and counsel them. I did and they decided to come to church anyway. The person told me "thank you" for being obedient to what the spirit was leading me to say to her because she listened and avoided chaos. The person would have been the initiator of the trouble which would have opened the lion's mouth. Usually, I don't answer my husband's phone, but the Lord knew I needed to because someone was going through emotional trauma and wanted to handle things in self. God is truly amazing. As I say, He drops what He wants me to do in my spirit and I obey. We all need to experience God's power and obey whatever He wants you to do. Stop questioning whether or not it is truly God! Remember Satan is up to no good and he will not help you to create peace, he wants you to disturb the peace. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit of God is saying to him/her.

I have experienced God in many ways, but the most exciting experiences is when His spirit speaks to my spirit, and my heavy burdens are literally lifted off of my shoulders. The peace that overcomes you when He ministers to you so amazing you never want it to cease. Always remember you may have some wilderness experiences (as I have had) when you can't seem to feel the presence of the Almighty God, but rest assured that He is going ahead of you to work His will out for your good.

Linda Mullings
Tallahassee – Westway Consuming Fire COGOP

Day 24

Communication is a vital part of every relationship and as Christians we should have a relationship with God so we must communicate with him. God is always speaking to us. He speaks in different ways, through his words, dreams, our circumstances, The Holy Spirit, the preacher and many other ways.

Gen 3:9-10

And the Lord called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

Adam was hiding from God because he disobeyed him. Many times we make mistakes and get messed up and instead of run to God we ran away from him, this is the time we need him most. He said in his words that if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

An example of how God spoke to me.

Many years ago I was having some difficulties and one night I dreamt that my phone was ringing and I picked it up, before I could answer I heard a voice says Lyn this is Jesus I just want you to know that I am with you always. Immediately I woke up, I was shaking, chills all over my body, but there was also a sense of peace and confidence that all is well. I call my friend and told her the dream, she was shouting and praising God. After hanging up from her I called my husband and he thank God and we both give him thanks for the encounter. I still feel that peace and confidence today.

God is always speaking but why are we not listening to his voice.

Ethlyn Webb

Green Acres - Broward Avenue COGOP

Day 25

****“He Spoke Two Words to Me”****

For many years for our wedding anniversary, we tried to visit different places, so in June of 2005 we traveled to Hilton Head South Carolina. On the way up, I noticed my eyes were constantly running water. I thought maybe allergies, but I also noticed the distance vision was becoming not very clear either, so I concluded it was time to change my Contact Lenses once we returned to Tampa. So, I made an appointment.

During the routine eye exam at the optometrist's office, I was failing the exam terribly and my doctor asked, what has happened to your eyes since a few months ago and almost immediately she made a call to a Retina specialist to see if they could see me right away and yes, they were.

After another careful examination (and I am becoming nervous but patiently waiting to hear what was happening), I was told by Dr. Mark Hammer I had what were Macular Holes in the center of both retinas in my eyes. That was why the running watery eyes due to the retina tearing and why the sight was also affected. I had also noticed there were times while I was looking at people far away, their faces appeared to be disfigured until they were close enough that I could identify who they were.

Well, it turned out the exam and diagnosis were much easier than what the treatment was to be. The procedure was to inject a gas bubble into the right eye (which was more severe) in hope that the gas pressure would push the retina back in place (Science 101 gas rises). What was the timeline, for some people 2-3 weeks and for some a little longer? (Guess who was in the percentage of those for a little longer). My duration from start to finish was about 14 months.

Not only was I to get the gas bubble injection, accompanying it was, I had to be in a face- down position while eating, sleeping walking, bathroom visits and of course there was no reading until after the bubble evaporated or hole closed. The doctor recommended ****talking books****.

Day 25 part 2

****“He Spoke Two Words to Me”****

And of course, with most surgeries there are potential risk factors. I had surgery on July 28th and immediately after recovery I went face- down. Post-op was Friday the next day in surgeon’s office; patch was removed, and I was asked if I could see the figure placed on the wall. ****I could not****. The room was already dark, but it became very quiet (Nate was there with me). The Dr took out a little round examining glass, looked into the eye and then drew a picture on a sheet of paper and said Mrs. Forbes,” this is what you should have seen, ****the big E**** but unfortunately your retina had become detached, we must do an emergency surgery to reattach your retina on Saturday”. I was temporarily blind in that eye.

Nate said the surgery took about 6 hours and after recovery I was told all went well and since I was developing a cataract, to keep from having an additional surgery for that, the Dr took out the old Len but didn’t insert the new IOL (Intraocular Len) for fear the retina would detach again. So, here I was, face down for several weeks and no Len in the right eye. I can’t tell you how difficult this was sleeping on my stomach to the point of having to move to the den and sleep on a sofa with my arm propped on the shoulder of it and watching television was through two-way mirrors. It took about 6 weeks for bubble to dissolve, and I was fully able to resume an upright position.

And visiting the Doctor every 2-3 week for follow ups only to hear, the hole is still there discouraging and taking a toll on me. Dr Hammer was very patience and supporting but I think even he had doubts whether my sight would improve because at one point my sight was a minus 2500 and he thought I should visit ****The Tampa Lighthouse for The Blind**** to inquire about special lenses. But on one visit after returning to the car, I began to cry feeling so disappointed and I started praying in the Spirit and the Lord spoke just these two words “Trust Me” just “Trust Me”.

After a few weeks had passed, one Sunday sitting in church I was looking at the choir singing, and I noticed the mic stands didn’t have a space in them anymore and other objects were also looking better. The following week at Doctor’s office he took a little longer examining my eye and then he said, “Well Mrs. Forbes******,” the hole is gone”****** I said, “Praise the Lord”. He was astonished and surprised because I felt he really had doubts earlier, but he continued say,” I want to know what church you attend”. All because God spoke those two words, ****“Trust Me**”**. He healed my eye in his own time and after 14 months I finally got my IOL, the Dr felt it was safe enough and I was seeing in ****HD (High Definition)****. **** Praise the Lord!**

Mary Forbes
Tampa – Hyde Park COGOP

Day 26

God speaks to us through others...

Two years ago, I was in North Carolina taking care of my terminally ill father. Dad had always been super strong and healthy, yet out of nowhere, diagnosed with bone cancer; given a few months to live. Because of his illness he had experienced loss of appetite so when he told me one morning that he wanted a sausage and egg biscuit from Biscuitville, I hurriedly jumped into the car heading to the restaurant. This was during the initial COVID outbreak, so drive-thru service was the only option, and the line was quite long. During the lengthy wait, I began to feel overwhelmed thinking of the few months I had left with the man I had adored my whole life. I was heartbroken, utterly grief-stricken. As I approached the pay window, the cashier informed me that the lady in the car in front of me had paid for my food – an unexpected, good deed. To most people, they would deduce it was just a simple random “act of kindness.” But for me it was more... I knew the Lord was speaking to me letting me know that He had not forsaken me or my dad and that He loved and cared for us both. Tears began to stream down my face as I thought of the goodness and mercies of the Lord. 2 Thessalonians 1:11 (NLT) states, “May He give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do.” God not only speaks to us through others, but He wants to speak to others through us – I am trying to get better at “listening” when He prompts me.

Carletta Sullivan

Ocala - COGOP

Day 27

About 27+ years ago, I was getting ready for church when this newborn Christian came to the parsonage a little before the service started and said to my dad: "Pastor I need to talk to you for a few minutes". My dad reply: "Go ahead". The young guy started telling him: "I had this dream about marrying this girl with curly, wavy hair, but I couldn't see her face; I also saw in the dream that we went to another country and were pastoring a church, what do you think this is about pastor"? My dad simply said, I think God is revealing your future to you. The room where I was getting ready was right next to where my dad and this young guy were talking, so I heard everything. Two years later I married, and after four years of marriage, I got this opportunity to come to America, but my husband and I were not sure if this was the will of God. We started praying and asking God to please guide us on what to do. That is when God reminded me about the dream this young guy told my dad sometime ago. I looked at my husband and said: "Do you remember when you came to my dad and told him about your dream? I was in the next room where you both were talking about it and heard everything". It happened to be, I was that girl, the one with the curly-wavy hair that this guy dreamed about. He looked at me and said: "We don't have to pray anymore, I can clearly see You are that girl, and God also showed me that we were going to another country". At that moment We were so amazed of how God spoke to my husband way before we even thought about dating.

The Bible says in Jeremiah 33:3 "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not". God can speak in different ways and show you mighty things.

We came to the USA in 2001, and since that time we have served the Lord pastoring in different congregations, just like he told my husband in the dream. Just remember, God still Speaks.

Libnis Lazo
Ft. Myers – Marion St. COGOP

Day 28

I was 12 years old in our youth camp setting during a quiet meditation time near the woods. I heard a voice say to me “I have called you, I have set you apart and I will use you”. I knew I loved him, but when He spoke to me I was shocked that He would speak directly and clearly to me & that He also loved me. Scars, baggage and all. Ashamed, broken & wounded. But I believed I needed Him more than He could ever need me but, He said “I have called you.” I was 12 and fell many times but I have come to far.

2 Corinthians 6:17, 18 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Another time when I had to learn a very difficult lesson was when we moved to Florida and my daughter had a boy friend that followed her from Nebraska. When he returned to Nebraska we attended a youth group in New Smyrna, the minister called her out and told her she was in a relationship that God was not pleased with, he wasn't the one. I was so excited that I went and got in the car to allow the kids to visit, rehearsing what to say when she got in the car. Suddenly God spoke to me so loud it scared me, He said "if you speak you will undo what I am doing" I said what wait ah man I wanted to speak so bad but I listened and after 2 weeks our daughter walked in and said mom, dad you know what that minister said well I have broken up with Brian and he will not be returning to Florida. Go ahead have a glory dance we have many times. I have many things I could share, but most importantly to me is when He has spoken to me I had to learn being obedient is key. If we speak when he says wait we can undo some of the greatest moves of God in our lives.

John 10: 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

Jacqueline Davis

Ormond Beach – Strong Tower Christian Fellowship COGOP

Day 29

When God speaks, He speaks in a still small voice, we have to listen for the voice of God. He wants to give us instructions.

When God speaks there is no confusion, because He is not the author of confusion. Everyone will know that He is speaking.

Jesus said, “My sheep know my voice and a strange voice they will not follow” This triune God speaks in unity.

When God speaks, He speaks peace into to our heart, He speaks peace in dead situations. Is there anything too hard for God?

When God speaks, we practice obedience, have faith and move to action. When we pray, we are to believe that God hears and answers our prayers.

When God speaks, He expects us to minister to Him, as Jude: 20 says, “but ye beloved building up yourselves on your most Holy faith; praying in the Holy Ghost.

When God speaks, He is in control the wind waves, fig tree, the dead, demons obey Him. Eph 5:1 says, “Be ye therefore followers of God as dear Children” Imitate God!

Loretta Millwood
Lake Mary COGOP

Day 30

The fact that God speaks has always been a given for me. I always believed that He has so much to say and that He is able to communicate it effectively.

I always thought that He could speak, but it never occurred to me that He would speak to me.

You see, I had this notion that God has special and extraordinary people that He would reveal His heart to provide instruction and guidance for decision making.

And that the ordinary people, like me would have to depend on these blessed individuals to hear from God.

I used this system for a few years, and it served its purpose, or at least that is what I thought. But my system was far from what God had designed for me or any of His children for that matter.

When I started to understand more about the Holy Spirit and what His role in the life of the believer is, my perspective shifted. I was no longer seeking for extraordinary people to tell me what God was saying. I understood that all God's children are extraordinary and that He longs to speak and commune with all of us.

So, I stopped following people with a connection and started to develop my own.

I learned that God does not have favorites or special ones. I learned that all it takes is to establish a relationship with our sweet Savior, and now I can say without a doubt that He speaks to me.

Day 30 part 2

God will use any situation to reveal himself to us. Just to mention an example, a few months back, I got off work, got my 7-year-old daughter from school and we were to pick up my son from preschool.

As my daughter and I were entering the preschool, she mentioned that she needed to use the restroom, I told her to go.

She said to me: You are not going to leave without me right mommy? I replied of course not, now go on to the restroom. I replied.

She went, or at least I thought she did, she came back and said again: You are not leaving without me right mommy?

I replied again, this time in a less patience manner: No! I am not leaving without you, now hurry up girl, we have a long way to go.

I continue to dismiss my son and I saw a little head picking out checking to see if I was still there.

By that time, my patience had gone down the drain and I was trying hard not to make a scene.

I looked at my child with a penetrating and exasperated look. We locked eyes and she understood that I meant business.

Day 30 part 3

She finally used the restroom and left the preschool. As we were walking to the car I scolded her about her behavior, but then it pained my heart that she felt like she must double, and triple checked to confirm that I would not leave her behind.

I went down on her eye level and locked eyes with her, this time with a compassionate look and asked her: Darling, have I ever left you behind before? she replied: no mommy, never.

Then I added, why do you act like you cannot trust me? to that she replied: I do not know mommy.

Then I added, you make mommy sad when you act like this, I reminded her that I love her more than she could imagine, and I hugged her.

As soon as I got into the car, the Lord spoke to me saying: You saw how she behaved? You behave the same way with me. Have I ever left you? I said, No Lord? Have I given you reasons to doubt my love for you? I replied, no Lord, never. So why do you doubt me? Why don't you have peace? Why don't you trust my character?

And just like that, the Lord showed me my shortcomings in such an evident, yet loving way, I had no other choice but to accept the chastisement and consider my ways.

The Lord uses any circumstance to pour out life into me and I praise him for the privilege of having His Holy Spirit dwelling in my life, and for the fact that He wants to speak to me, to guide me and make me better.

Ingrid F. Nelson White

Hollywood COGOP

Day 31

Our emphasis this month, GOD SPEAKS, has been for one purpose...the influence of God in our lives.

Although my dust-formed ears have never heard the voice of God, He has spoken to me throughout my life in a myriad of ways: through His word, people, circumstances, silence, a whisper, impressions in my spirit, butterflies, supernatural manifestations, and dreams.

God spoke to Moses through a burning bush and to Balaam through a donkey. He spoke to Saul through a bright light, to Peter, Paul, and John through dreams. One day God spoke to Scott and me through a tattered piece of paper on the roadside while walking. In referencing this particular encounter, I've often thought about titling it, 'Trash-Talk'. God can and will use whatever He deems appropriate to get our attention.

It's life-altering to hear the voice of Almighty God and witness how He customizes His conversations with us. When such encounters occur, no one needs to convince you Who has spoken. You know.

God speaks to people who take the time to listen. So may the loudest voice in our lives be God's voice, followed by heeding His message. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:15).

Brenda Gillum

First Lady of the State of Florida

Reflection:

[illegible]

Reflection:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal brown ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Reflection:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal brown ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

PKs for PKs



PKs WILL SOON BEGIN RECEIVING
COMMUNICATION FROM THE TEAM

#LETSCONNECT



ALICIA CALEY is a Miami native, whose passion and purpose is to live for Jesus. She is currently a full-time student, pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in biology at the University of Central Florida with hopes to work in marine conservation education. Alicia is a member of Southside Church in Winter Garden, Florida where she serves on the worship team and in the Next Gen Ministries. She loves Jesus and loves serving him in these capacities, but is also excited to be taking on a new area of ministry to pastors' kids. She is committed to walking alongside other PKs as they navigate the highs and lows of family ministry.



JESSICA CALEY was born in Miami, FL and is the daughter of Bishop Joshua Caley Sr. and Lady Aretha Graham-Caley. She is currently entering the eighth grade at Frank C. Martin International K-8 Center. Jessica enjoys writing poetry, listening to music, and reading. She hopes to become a music director in the Musical Theatre industry and a professional musician. She attends Higher Praise and Worship Center and serves in the praise team as well as the AV team. Jessica has a passion for finding any way she can to encourage others, and is excited to continue to do that through PK ministry. One of her favorite scriptures is Isaiah 41:13, "*For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.*"



JOSHUA R. CALEY, JR. is a native of Miami and is most thankful to be a sinner saved by grace. Joshua's passions are first and foremost teaching and preaching the word of God; as such, he serves as associate pastor of his local church, Higher Praise and Worship Center COGOP, and aspires to pastoral ministry whenever the Lord calls. Joshua is also an eleventh grade English teacher at Florida Christian School and considers his role in the classroom a calling as well. His favorite pastimes include reading, writing, enjoying a good movie, and spending time with family and friends.



MAGGIE VERNON is a recent college graduate who gained her bachelor's degree in kinesiology/exercise science. She is currently working a part time job as she prepares to be married in November. She hopes to soon become certified in the field of health and wellness and work as a nutritionist in order to teach people about food and health. She grew up as a pastor's kid and knew how difficult it could be at times, so she is excited to encourage her fellow PK's in this group!



RACHEL VERNON is a 10 year old fifth grader who loves the Lord. She is a member of Leesburg Church of God of Prophecy where she assists in the nursery. Rachel loves fishing with her dad, playing with her dogs, reading, and going to both camp and church. It is her desire to see kids her age serve God even if it means being different!



REAGAN VERNON "We can't wait to connect with PKs in the Sunshine State! We attend the Well in Auburndale. I love to talk with people about church history and theology. I graduated with a BA in History from Lee University in Cleveland, TN and am currently pursuing an MA in Medieval History at the USF Tampa. I hope to teach at a Christian university. As a PK, I know how our lives are shaped by our local church and the Christian community we have. I want to show our PKs that they are surrounded statewide by others with similar interests and experiences to their own. This initiative is all about recognizing the community that God has already provided for us. We can all be encouraged by each other and grow together!"



HAYLEE VERNON "I enjoy reading mystery novels, Christian historical fiction, writing scripts and making short films. I am pursuing an AS in Video Production at Polk State College in Lakeland and work at the school as a teaching lab assistant in the Digital Media department. One day, I hope to work in a film production company to expand my knowledge. PK struggles are very real, so I'm appreciative to be a part of PKs pouring into other PKs!"

Pastoral Care Letter
July 2022



From my heart to yours...

Dear Pastoral Care Leader,

Just as a reminder we are now gearing up for our 101st International Assembly to be held July 20-24, 2022 at the Oklahoma City Convention Center. I would like to remind you to encourage your congregation to provide them with the financial assistance to be able to attend this exciting event in our church.

In addition, I would like to encourage you to give them a week off after the Assembly in order to have some time for rest and recuperation before returning to their regular duties. This will allow them to return with a renewed excitement about their work for another year!

We are the ones that are to love and care for those that minister to us each week, so don't ever underestimate the importance of your role as Pastoral Care Leader!

I just want to say personally that I am so very proud of everything you have been doing for your pastor and family.

Blessings,
Frankie S. Dotson
State Pastoral Care Director



Happy Independence Day!

★ ★ ★ **REMINDER** ★ ★ ★

PASTOR

ASSEMBLY LOVE OFFERING

Thank you in advance
for all you do
in making it possible
for your Pastor to attend
this important Assembly.

"I'm Frankie Dotson
and I approve this
message."



Frankie S. Dotson
State Pastoral Care Director



Reminder Assembly Love Offering

**If you haven't already, please send
in your offering or scan the QR Code
to give electronically.
Thank you for all you do!**



2022 FLORIDA STATE MEN'S CONFERENCE

AUGUST 26TH - 27TH

TURE WARS

CAMP SONSHINE



WE HAVE EXCITING NEWS

COGOP SOE IS FINALLY HERE!!

WHAT IS SOE?

School of the Evangelists.

"Florida Ministries intends to raise the function of evangelist to the level of equipping leaders in local churches for life. Paul instructs that each function of ministry is for the encouragement and increase of the body and is necessary for the church to mature into the full measure and stature of Christ. Therefore, we recommend that each local church raise the function of evangelist and the work of evangelism that reaches people with the Gospel in order for lives to be transformed."



WITH EVANGELIST ZACH TEASDALE

"We will help your church go from fear to fearless as we spur them on to fulfill the great commission by equipping the local body with the foundation and practical application of "doing the work of an evangelist" so that they can make sure their calling. Win your city for Jesus! Fill your church with new souls! Without doing an evangelist's work to make full proof of thy ministry. We won't know what our ministry could be!"
2 Tim 4:5

LEVEL 1

Equip your church.

LEVEL 2

Town Crusade.

LEVEL 3

Flagship Crusade

[For more information click here!](#)

WE NEED YOU BECOME A HUB PARTNER



"HELP US BUILD"

3 ways to help:

Build the core team: The opportunity is now here to join a team that has performed over 1400 crusades and seen over one million souls come to Christ. Learn directly from the methods of Reinhard Bonnke and Billy Graham.

Build Florida: Invite us to your church so we can train your people to win your city. Evangelism is the vehicle that pastors visions must take to go from visions to manifest. Fill your church with effective leaders and new converts.

Build partners: Become a monthly partner to help us equip our leaders to have the furthest reach and the greatest impact in the neighborhoods and communities of our loved ones.

Become a HUB partner, Help us build!

Call or email me at :



727-859-8956



<https://flcogop.org/cogopsoe>



zach.teasdale@nacogop.org