



Relationship with God

Kristen Davis, Ph.D.

DoubtLess Faith Ministries, Inc.

www.doubtlessfaith.com



Have you ever felt like
your relationship with
God is like this?



Personal Relationship with God?

“Those who have a personal relationship with God **include God in their daily lives**. They **pray to Him, read His word**, and **meditate on verses** in an effort to get to know Him even better.”

“As soon as we become children of God, we receive the Holy Spirit, who will begin to work on our hearts. We should **pray** without ceasing, **read** the Bible, and **join** a Bible-believing church; all these things will help us to **grow spiritually**. **Trusting in God** to get us through each day and **believing** that He is our sustainer **is the way to have a relationship with Him**. Although we may not see changes immediately, we will begin to see them over time, and all the truths will become clear.”

Take Away: How is this different from any other text-based religion (i.e., Islam, Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witness, etc.)?

Does this sound like a personal relationship between me and my brother?

I have a personal relationship with brother. I include him in my daily life by **saying things to** him (prayer), **reading** texts and emails he sent to other people (reading the Bible), **thinking about the things** in his writings (meditating on verses), and **getting together** with other people who do the same things in relation to him (fellowship of believers).

WHAT?!?

How is this a relationship if my brother never talks to me?



Human relationship entails bi-directional personal communication, why would we expect divine relationship to be uni-directional?

What does this tell us about the nature of the relationship between God and the first humans?

And they **heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden** in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I **heard the sound of you** in the garden” – Genesis 3:8-10a

- Intimacy, familiarity, bi-directional communicative relationship.



God's Final Plan for Divine-Human Relationship

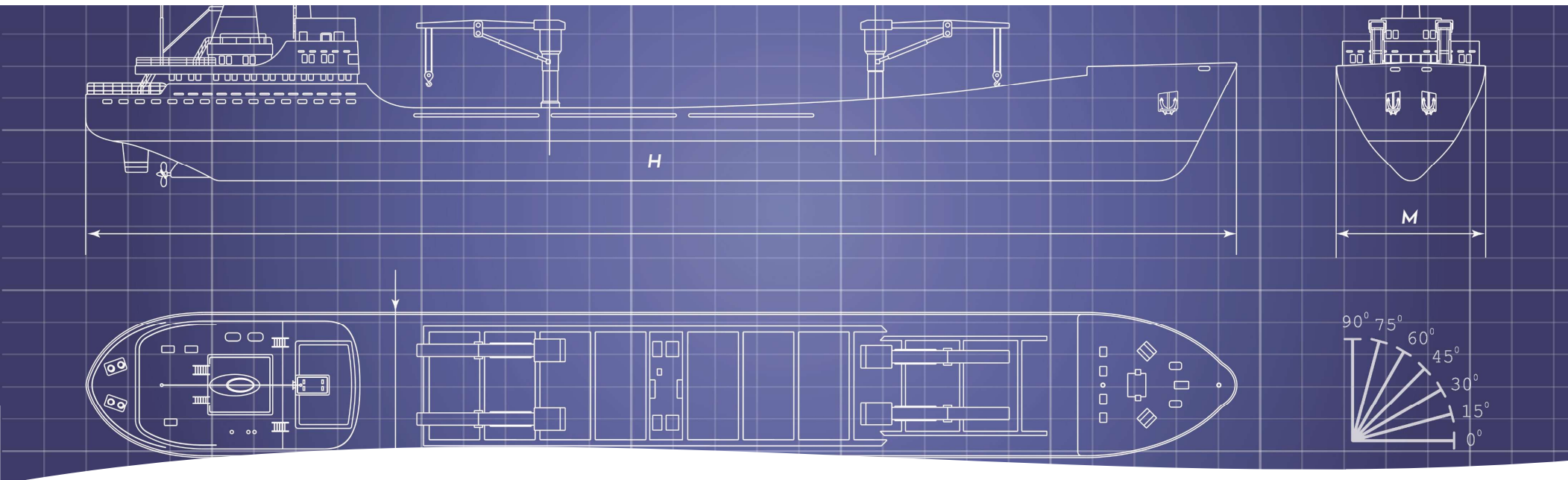
And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. – Revelation 21:3



God's initial template and final plan for divine-human relationship was/is bi-directionally communicative.

Why would we expect him to behave differently in the time in-between, if that's his goal?





God's interactions with humans is more than mere impressions and wisdom application.

Architectural Plans & Schematics.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah **walked with God**. . . And **God said** to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. **Make** yourself an ark of **gopher wood**. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out **with pitch**. This is how you are to make it: the **length of the ark 300 cubits**, its **breadth 50 cubits**, and its **height 30 cubits**. Make a **roof** for the ark, and finish it to a **cubit above**, and set the **door** of the ark in its side. Make it with **lower, second, and third decks**." - Gen 6:9-17



God interacts with humans that are not a part of the redemption plan too.

The **angel of the Lord found her** by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. And **he said**, “Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?” **She said**, “I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai.” The **angel of the Lord said to her**, “Return to your mistress and submit to her.” The **angel of the Lord also said** to her, “I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.” And the **angel of the Lord said** to her, “Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son...”

So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, “You are a God of seeing,” for she said, “Truly **here I have seen him** who looks after me.” – Genesis 16:7-13



If that's what relationship with God looks like pre-christ and without the indwelling of the HS, then why would we think it would be less than that now?

John 16:7-15: It is **to your advantage** that I go away, for if I do not go away, the **Helper will not come to you**. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will **convict** the world . . . When the Spirit of truth comes, he will **guide** you into all the truth, for he will not **speak** on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will **speak**, and he will **declare** to you the things that are to come. He will **glorify** me, for he will take what is mine and **declare** it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and **declare** it to you.

Take Aways

- Human relationship entails bi-directional personal communication, why would we expect divine relationship to be uni-directional?
- God's initial template and final plan for divine-human relationship was/is bi-directionally communicative, why would we expect him to behave differently in the time in-between if that's his goal?
- God's interactions with humans is more than mere impressions and feelings and wisdom application (architectural plans/schematics).
- God interacts with humans that are not a part of the redemption plan too.



Hearing from
God

What gets in the way of us hearing God?

Lack of Experience

Might sound like:

- I don't know how to talk to God
- What does it mean to have a relationship with someone you can't see
- I've never heard from God

Root: Experiential – They just need someone to show them what it looks like to encounter God. They need a coach/guide to get them started.

Resolution:

Listening prayer (i.e., “do you want to ask God what He has to say about that?”)

Wrong Information

Might sound like:

- God doesn't speak today
- God only speaks to certain kinds of people (Christian VIPs)

Root: Intellectual

Resolution:

Instruction (i.e., theology/apologetics)

Relational Stumbling Blocks

Might sound like:

- God wouldn't speak to me
- I don't want to believe my life is on purpose
- The church just wants to control people
- What will my friends think if I say I've heard from God

Root: Emotional - We have beliefs about ourself, others, and/or relationships that get in the way of connection.

Resolution:

Listening prayer (i.e., “do you want to ask God what He has to say about that?”)

Spiritual Forces

Might sound like:

- My family has been involved in the occult, witchcraft, etc.
- I have been abducted/had an experience with extra-terrestrials/aliens
- I have to pray to/make happy/not upset ancestors, other gods, other beings.

Root: Spiritual

Resolution:

Listening prayer **explicitly in the name of Jesus** (i.e., “do you want to ask Jesus to silence those voices so you can hear him?”).

Will

Might sound like:

- If God speaks today, then I'd have to do what he says
- If God speaks today, then people could abuse people by saying he said things he did.
- If God speaks today, then

Root: Will

Resolution: Pray that the Lord soften their heart and give them a desire to hear from him.

Sin

Might sound like:

- I know what they Bible says but...
- The morality of the Bible is outdated.
- The Bible isn't really relevant today.
- I'm only human.

Root: Unrepentant sin

Resolution: Repent and align yourself with God's self-revelation in the scriptures. NOTE: accidental sin is different from intentional or willful sin.

Ways that God Speaks to Us

An intuition or sense directing you

- Mark 2:8 – “And immediately Jesus, *perceiving in his spirit* that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts?”

A thought coming to mind - Nehemiah 7:5, 12 – my God put it into my heart – a cognitive experience that centers on receiving a series of thoughts that come directly from God

- Nehemiah 2:12 – “And I told no one what *my God had put into my heart* to do for Jerusalem.”
- Nehemiah 7:5 – “Then *my God put it into my heart* to assemble the nobles and the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogy.”

Take Away: Comes from Outside Yourself

Sometimes accompanied by

Someone saying something to you – someone says something and it fits your circumstance and yet they didn't know about it. It was exactly what you needed to hear.

A verse you read – you read something in the Bible and it gave you peace about a circumstance you were struggling with or prompted you to go in a different direction or gave you a new idea you had not previously considered.

A dream/vision – God is doing this in the middle east like crazy – Read *Dreams and Visions* by Tom Doyle.

An angelic visitation – all over the Bible, Judith MacNutt Books, *Angels on Earth* magazine – Craig Keener in *Miracles Today*, just because not all of them are real doesn't mean none of them are.

A circumstance or experience – you encounter someone or something happens that puts your mind at ease or answers a prayer you had without the person involved having knowledge about the situation.

We Need to Practice Hearing from God (Samuel 3)

(1) In contrast to my talking to myself, the series of thoughts had a distinctive feel of dawning on me from the outside.

(2) The statement was in the first person: *Why don't you ask me [not God] to do something for you today?* When I talk to myself about God, I use the third person (for example, *Why doesn't God do something for me today?*)

(3) The thought's texture was calm, steady, and matter-of-fact, with no nagging, no anxiety.

(4) The thought had a feeling of authority to it.

– JP Moreland, *The Simple Guide*, pg 155.


Resources (Many of the Books have Audio/Video on the Author's Website)

- Theology
 - *The Forgotten God: Reversing our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit* by Francis Chan
 - *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: A Comprehensive Guide* by Sam Storms
 - *Listening to the Spirit in the Text* by Gordon Fee
 - *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* by Gordon Fee
 - *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* by Gordon Fee
- Apologetics
 - *A Simple Guide to Experience Miracles: Instruction & Inspiration for Living Supernaturally in Christ* by JP Moreland
 - *Miracles Today* by Craig Keener
 - *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* by Craig Keener
 - *Dreams and Visions: Is Jesus Awakening the Muslim World?* by Tom Doyle
- Listening Prayer
 - *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God* by Dallas Willard
 - "The Process of Learning to Hear from God" in *The Place We Find Ourselves* podcast, Episode 38, https://open.spotify.com/episode/5Nr0Y1CjS8RRn8nQaZ36RC?si=fT6BSzICQDi_uZM4S2EVjg
 - "Listening Prayer" in *On the Trail* podcast, Episode 36, <https://open.spotify.com/episode/6szUPjMG6zUfCV6FIKPFM1?si=tqSLXN0hTDC7A72yotcdJg>
 - *The Collaboratory* podcast episodes 1-27 (Broken into 2 groups Foundations & Toolkit) <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-prelab/id1714349434?i=1000635699445>
 - *Living Fearless* by Jamie Winship
- Inner Healing (Psychology Principles from Christians)
 - *I Will Give you Rest: How you can experience the peace Jesus promised* by Edward Kurath
 - *Escaping Enemy Mode: How Our Brains Unite or Divide Us* by Jim Wilder and Ray Woolridge
 - *The Joy Switch* by Chris Coursey

There might be things you disagree with in these resources. No resource is 100% perfect. Eat the meat and spit out the bones. (Keep what's helpful/true, leave what isn't). These are resources I have read and find trustworthy or have received from people I find trustworthy, so wrestle with what you disagree with before you throw it out.

Next Steps

- Leave a Google Review
 - *This gives other people confidence in my services b/c it comes straight from you!
 - <https://g.page/r/CRWnEZeel0r2EAI/review>
- Sign up for a Virtual “Relationship with God” Workshop
 - <https://www.doubtlessfaith.com/events>
- Sign up for 1-1 Coaching
 - <https://www.doubtlessfaith.com/coaching>
- Subscribe to my email list to stay up to date on future resources/events
 - <https://www.doubtlessfaith.com/>
- Help me bring this to more people (click the link to see what your gift would enable)
 - <https://secure.givelively.org/donate/doubtless-faith-ministries-inc/2025-budget>



Q & A