

INTERVARSITY

A Somewhat Exhaustive List of Ways God Speaks

Verbal Communication - an internal, inaudible message through a word or words spoken through the still, small voice of God, or perhaps, on occasion, the audible voice of God. This communication could be a specific Scripture, a statement, a question, a command. The "*still small voice*" in 1 Kings 19:12 can also be translated "the sound of gentle stillness" or "a gentle whisper;" the Hebrew is literally "a voice, a small whisper."

Mental Pictures - inner picture-images or symbols, or messages as parables; a picture flashed across the inner screen of our mind.

Encounter - a phenomenal experience with God without words, but leaving an overwhelming message or strong impression.

Vision - a series of pictorial messages or visual images, literal or symbolic, while *awake*. These may require some additional reflective and prayerful interpretation.

Dream - a series of pictorial messages or visual images, literal or symbolic, while *asleep*. There are two formats of dreams -- dreams arising from the subconscious mind that *God uses* to convey a message, and dreams that are directly heaven-sent *from God*. Dreams may require some additional reflective and prayerful interpretation.

Intellectual Reasoning - cognitive, mental processing and evaluating of data leading to clear conclusions like connecting pieces of a puzzle.

Imagination - inner images or concepts creatively conceived or formed through guided imagery.

Impression - inner conviction, direction, or affirmation of a thought that has more strength than a normal thought or "hunch."

Intuition - knowing spontaneously the right thing to do or say.

Conscience - knowing right from wrong. See Romans 2:15; 9:1.

Thoughts - ideas or principles, words or pictures that grow with increasing awareness, clarity, unfolding, intensity, conviction, or volume in the mind.

Emotions - a gut-level feeling, desire, impulse, impression, arresting concern, or insistent nudge.

Memory - the remembrance of an event, thought or Scripture previously learned. See John 2:22; 14:26.

Common Sense - the ordinary use of rational, good judgment through experience and logical thinking.

Observation - a quickening of insight when observing or reflecting on people, art or inanimate objects. For Scriptural examples of listening to God by observing inanimate objects, see Jeremiah and the potter's wheel in Jeremiah 18:1-10; Amos and the plumb line in Amos 7:7-8; and Saul and Samuel's torn cloak in 1 Samuel 15:27-28.

Liturgy - a ritual ceremony or observance that emphasizes or drives home a certain reality or truth. The practice of the Lord's Supper is a profound example of this means of God's communication to us.

Nature - the silent shouting of God's creation, or inner messages that occur through ordinary created objects such as a flower or a tree. See Psalm 19:1-4.

Circumstances - confirming situations and events that all seem to point in the same direction often combined with a profound sense of inner peace. See Colossians 3:15.

Signs and Wonders - external, more dramatic, supernatural and visible demonstrations of God's love and power to help, heal, care or deliver.

Pain - physical suffering serving as God's megaphone to gain our attention or teach some lesson.

Angels - messengers from God.

Theophany - a visible manifestation of God bringing a message. See Exodus 3:1-6.

Tongues and Interpretation - a spontaneous message from God in an unlearned language with interpretation in order to speak incisively to a situation, or bring immediate and profound comfort and peace to a person in distress.

Word of Wisdom - an appropriate, instantaneous insight for a particular occasion, to make a right decision, to discern good from evil, or to resolve, help or heal a particular situation or need.

Word of Knowledge - a fragment of knowledge or disclosure of truth implanted by God -- not learned through the mind -- about a particular person or situation for a specific purpose.

Prophecy - a timely message or utterance through an individual from God to strengthen, encourage or comfort that person or that group of people at that particular time. See 1 Corinthians 14:3.

Music - meditative or worshipful music that brings stillness, a sense of God's presence, or a spirit of praise.

Bible - the holy, super-slow, spiritual reading and application of the Scriptures, and can include using the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. *Lectio divina* or divine reading is sometimes described as "reading with the mind in the heart." The written revelation of God's Word is combined together with the way the Holy Spirit quickens particular portions as a direct word in a present circumstance.

Meditation - memorization, repetition and prayerful rumination of Scripture texts.

Devotional Classics - a holy, super-slow reading of spiritual writings.

Journaling - writing down times of communion or conversations with God.

Soul Friends - spiritual guides, godly friends or spouses who provide spiritual direction and counsel.

Collective Voice - the united voice and decision made by a group of believers.

Preaching and Teaching - public presentation of the Word of God and applied by the Holy Spirit to the individual.

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