

SOAP Bible Study method.....

Did you know that God talks to us? Many of us do...most of us do...maybe even all of us. Yet, perhaps we can learn a new perspective on this. That's my objective herein in sharing this week's message. How do we hear God talking to us...?

Sometimes it's a *sense of peace* that comes upon us from seemingly nowhere.

Sometimes it comes from *circumstance* where a situation makes known a revelation to us.

Sometimes it's a *person* who shares something with us, and not even necessarily directly of the subject of God or the Holy Bible.

Sometimes it's the *strangest set of "apparent circumstances"* (aka providence) where a desire of heart that was not even openly expressed is met (eg a seemingly unlinked series of doors opened a new opportunity!)

Sometimes...and I personally find this to be rare, yet amazingly wonderful, you hear His voice *directly*.

I am confident that there are other ways in which we can hear from God.

God is talking to you...even right now...hopefully. So, before we go much further, and please do not ever take this Scripture for granted,

"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts..." Hebrews 3:15 (NIV)

I have come to believe that the principle way in which God talks to us is through us...His saints...as captured by the saints who God-inspired wrote the Holy Bible. Do you really WANT to hear God, because He talks and / or waits to talk to you! "Ask and it will be given, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened"...Jesus said it!

Here's a neat way to listen...use **SOAP**.



"Hearing" from God can very much be akin to having a bath, don't you know? What's your fave soap? Office worker = Sunlight probably for our delicate hands; Techos & especially Army types = Solvol probably; Cleaning up after Babies = Sard probably – talking about using soap on the nappies of-course (yucky) 😊

Okay...time to use some soap...here we go with Psalm 46.

Psalm 46^[a] New International Version (NIV)

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to *alamoth*.^[b] A song.

- ¹ God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
- ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
- ³ though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.^[c]
- ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
- ⁵ God is within her, she will not fall;

God will help her at break of day.
⁶Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
 he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
⁷The LORD Almighty is with us;
 the God of Jacob is our fortress.
⁸Come and see what the LORD has done,
 the desolations he has brought on the earth.
⁹He makes wars cease
 to the ends of the earth.
 He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
 he burns the shields^(d) with fire.
¹⁰He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
 I will be exalted among the nations,
 I will be exalted in the earth."
¹¹The LORD Almighty is with us;
 the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Footnotes:

- a. [Psalm 46:1](#) In Hebrew texts 46:1-11 is numbered 46:2-12.
- b. [Psalm 46:1](#) Title: Probably a musical term
- c. [Psalm 46:3](#) The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 7 and 11.
- d. [Psalm 46:9](#) Or *chariots*

New International Version (NIV)

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Now, time to wash. Let's apply **SOAP**, shall we? 😊

Actually, congratulations if you read this far! We have already covered, "S," which is the reading of the **Scripture**.

What's the next part? If you're a transactional type of person, as so many military people can be, then you may be saying, "C'mon Glenn, just get on with it!" If that's you may I make a suggestion...take a deep breath, hold, let it out...relax...and now continue on...

What came off the page at you? What peaked your interest from within the Psalm? Where did your heart & mind go as you read? Did the Holy Spirit quicken the living Word to you?

If not, don't be concerned; just go back and re-read...with "expectation" that God will talk to you.

"O," is for what comes off the page to you, which is our **Observation**. If I may, here is what comes off the page at me. I see four sections in the Psalm, as follows, and here's what comes to heart and mind concerning each section:

<p><u>Section 1 – Verses 1 thru 3</u> God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way</p>	<p><i>Who is the person of God to us, to you? Have you made Him your refuge, your strength; do you through such, hand your troubles over to Him, that is, are you a genuine "God botherer," dare I use the term? Remember, Jesus invited us to,</i></p>
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<p>and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging</p>	<p>“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28) Can you <u>hear</u> God in this...God actually wants you to take refuge in Him, and to be your ever-present help in trouble. We need to pray until we know-that-we-know that we have genuinely given Him the burden. <u>Then we will not fear</u> – then we have come through into the other side of the <u>battle of rest</u>, into the peace that is remarkably beyond our abilities...we know that we have peace now that we are trusting God...so do others recognise this peace as it is genuinely unmistakable; even remarkable, and especially when we are going through a problem time.</p>
<p><u>Section 2 – Verses 4 thru 7</u> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.</p>	<p>The Old Testament speaks of the City of Zion. The New Testament speaks of the Bride of Christ. She is the Church. She is you and I, if we have accepted Jesus as LORD and Saviour, & <u>each of us collectively make-up the bricks-n-mortar of the Church</u>, where God dwells within. Jesus said, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.” (John 14:23) <u>God protects</u> and rallies to <u>His own</u>. “No weapon formed against you shall prosper. And every tongue which rises against you in judgement You shall condemn.” (Isaiah 54:17)</p>
<p><u>Section 3 – Verses 6 thru 9</u> Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Come and see what the LORD has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.</p>	<p>As per the second half of the previous section, God protects those who are His. I especially am heartened by Jesus’ words, ‘I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. “I am the good shepherd; <u>I know my sheep</u> and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.”’ (John 10:11-15) God will graciously deal with my situation. God will resolve the situation <u>His way, in His Time</u>; so important to thereby TRUST.</p>
<p><u>Section 4 – Verses 10 thru 11</u> He says, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” ¹¹The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.</p>	<p><u>Be still, and know that I am God</u>...SWOON moment here. This is the outcome, the peace that comes from achieving trust in God on any handed-over troublesome situation, the outcome of the <u>Battle of Rest!</u> Many a time in the old Testament, God affirms His Sovereignty with words like, “<u>Then they will know that I am God!</u>” When we get to being still through the process of knowing-that-we-know that we have handed up to God our trouble (using our God-given “faith muscle”), then that personally-challenging <u>act of faith</u> will always be</p>

glorified, by Him! And so...LORD Almighty is our fortress; "fortress" being twice-mentioned in the Psalm.

Well, that's Observation done with...at least from my end. I wonder what each of you may have observed when you read this Psalm? Well, that's yours...you get to own it in your relationship with God.

So, now we move our SOAP onto the all-important, "A," which is Application [to our personal lives]...where the rubber meets the road. When God talks to you then you are likely going to be required to implement something of what God has just shared; implementation = righteous behaviour, or righteousness, achieved through faithful obedience. Another "A" would be action.

For me, after considering my personal observations (in the above table), what do I believe the Holy Spirit quickened to me from my reading and mediation upon this Psalm? What I heard is that God is calling me to increase my TRUST in Him. What I heard is that there are still areas of my life where I continue to deny God permission to be my refuge and my strength; to be my fortress. Things I am still tripping over as I continue to bang my head against the brick wall of pride by trying to change them in my own strength.

Having captured the application through the mediation that the "O" brings us, we complete the Application by proceeding onto the, "P," for Prayer. Here's how application gets fulfilled then, in my case...today...

"Dear Father. Thank-you for humbling me yet again. Thank-you for reminding me how deeply I am in need of you.

Father, I talk too much. I'm not a good listener. I interrupt people so very much.

Jesus, I need your help, really need your help. Jesus, help me. Amen."

And that's it! **SOAP**.

I was in literal tears as I wrote the above prayer, yet again enjoying God's amazing peace. Now I know-that-I-know that God has this problem of mine in hand. Strange that I could take so very long to give something like this properly to Him.

He will change me, where I have continually failed to change myself, where I have tried and failed too many times. It's God's now; the Battle of rest includes not taking it back! Tears of joy have replaced years of frustration having moved into TRUST by FAITH in God with this handover through PRAYER.

Funny thing...I once overheard my brother David telling my sister Donna that I really was "saved." Donna was clearly having trouble believing David. David said something like, "No Donna, it's true. Glenn actually cries now!"

Most of you did not know me before Christ (age 30), and how full of myself I was (still am to a lesser degree...God's Work-in-Progress, like you, right?). God promised to change me and build in me the character of Christ; and that included the process of transforming a hard stony heart to a heart of flesh that is increasingly responsive to Him, one that even sheds tears...

So,

"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts..." Hebrews 3:15 (NIV)

Shalom Shalom

Glenn W. Thomas

Representative

Military Christian Fellowship of Australia