



Prayer Lesson

1 Peter 2:9-10

A couple of weeks ago while I was on a business trip, I was talking on my cell phone with my wife (yes, they do more than send text messages!). I had just received some great news and was excited to share it with her. Suddenly, I realized that she hadn't said anything for several seconds. I looked at my screen and it said that we still had a connection. I said her name several times and waited for a response but did not get one. I was frustrated because I was pretty sure that she was still on the line, but for some reason my conversation was only working one-way. After hanging up and trying again, we were able to resume the conversation, but later I got to thinking about my experience and realized that prayer can sometimes feel the same way. I know that God can hear me when I pray, but when His voice feels silent in my life, I sometimes wonder if the connection only works one-way.

1 Peter 2:9-10 (NLT)

"Go out and stand before me on the mountain," the Lord told him. And as Elijah stood there, the Lord passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave... (New Living Translation)

In this story, Elijah was searching for God. First, he looked for Him in a windstorm, then a powerful fire, but God was not in either of those things. This was a very significant experience for Elijah because God had established a pattern of appearing in these ways over hundreds of years when communicating with His people. God appeared in a burning bush to Moses in Exodus 3 and in billows of smoke on Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19 with winds that shook the ground. Despite these patterns, Elijah does not feel God's presence until he hears the faintest of whispers.

Do you ever find yourself expecting God's voice to come in windstorms and explosive fireworks? I know that when I am desperately seeking God in prayer, I most often want to hear or see His response in very obvious, visible ways. If I am sick, I pray for healing and want to feel better immediately. If I need help with a problem, I want a clear solution. If I am in emotional pain, I want God make the pain go away. Sometimes, though, I feel the same way I did during my dropped call with my wife. I talk to God in

prayer and feel and see no change. It is in those moments that I need to remember that God's voice sometimes comes in a gentle whisper. He doesn't always work in dramatic ways. Sometimes it is in the little things that God moves the most. I might not feel healthy right away, but He may nudge me toward the help that I need. A solution may not present itself to fix my problems, but He can use those problems to make me stronger. The pain may not always go away immediately, but He sometimes uses that pain to remind of all that He has blessed me with.

These are just a few tangible ways that God speaks through a whisper. How are you looking for God to respond to your prayers? Maybe the connection hasn't been lost. Perhaps you are just not listening carefully enough.

Discussion Questions:

- How has God spoken or moved in your life in a way that seems like a powerful wind or fire?
- How has God spoken or moved in your life in a way that seems like a gentle whisper?
- What things in your life can make it difficult for you to hear God's whisper?
- Why do you think that God uses a whisper sometimes instead of a dramatic experience?