

How to Recognize

God's Voice

in Your Life

Have I Heard from God?

BY RICK
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There's no simple formula for knowing if you're hearing from God—it takes wisdom and discernment. But if you can answer “yes” to the seven question below, it's very likely God is speaking to you.

1. Does it agree with the Bible?

God's will never contradicts what he's already said in his Word. *“Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away”* (Luke 21:33 NIV).

2. Does it make me more like Christ?

God's purpose is to make you more like Jesus—so if he tells you to do something, it will nudge you toward that goal. *“In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 2:5 NCV).

3. Does my church family confirm this?

We're meant to live in relationship, so you can rely on mature believers to help you listen to Jesus. *“[God's] intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known”* (Ephesians 3:10 NIV).

4. Is it consistent with how God shaped me?

Before you were born, God decided what he wanted you to do with your life—and when he formed you, he gave you the spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality, and experiences for that specific task. *“We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”* (Ephesians 2:10 NIV).

5. Does it concern my responsibility?

Sometimes God may give you a message to share with someone else. But most often, God will talk to you about your own life—and he'll speak directly to others about what they need to hear. *“We shall all be judged one day, not by each other's standards or even our own, but by the standard of Christ. . . . It is to God alone that we have to answer for our actions”* (Romans 14:10, 12 PHILLIPS).

6. Is it convicting rather than condemning?

God convicts you to lovingly correct you—but Satan condemns you to criticize and accuse you. *“There is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus”* (Romans 8:1 NLT).

7. Do I sense God's peace about it?

If you feel pressured, overwhelmed, and confused about a decision, you're probably not hearing from God—because God's voice brings peace. *“God is not the author of confusion, but of peace”* (1 Corinthians 14:33 NKJV).

Knowing whether you're hearing from God takes wisdom and discernment there's no foolproof checklist. But if you can answer “yes” to all seven of these questions, there's a good chance that what you're hearing is from God.

Conviction vs. Condemnation

BY RICK
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Sometimes you think you're hearing God's voice of conviction—but you're really hearing Satan's voice of condemnation. So how do you know the difference? Here are a few ways.

**Conviction
corrects you,**

**while condemnation
criticizes you.**

**Conviction points out
what you've done wrong,**

**while condemnation
attacks your worth.**

**Conviction brings a
pinpoint of light,**

**while condemnation brings
a dark cloud of guilt.**

**Conviction
is specific,**

**while condemnation
is vague.**

**Conviction goes away
when you repent,**

**while condemnation
stays.**

Remember, if you're experiencing condemnation, that's not from God. In fact, Revelation 12:10 calls Satan *"the accuser"* (NIV).

But when you hear God's voice of conviction, respond in repentance, trusting that he'll forgive you immediately and completely: *"God is faithful and reliable. If we confess our sins, he forgives them and cleanses us from everything we've done wrong"* (1 John 1:9 GW).