

WALKING WITH GOD

A Synopsis, by

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HEARING GOD.

There is a prevailing Christian belief that God does not speak directly to individuals anymore. The belief is that His only word is the Bible. But, that’s not what the Bible says. Neither is it the experience of some Christians. And, those who do hear God speak to them directly may conceal that fact from other Christians. This concealment may be so that the hearing Christian will not be controversial and will fit in with the rest of his church.

The Bible, of course, says that hearing God, directly, is to be expected in the Church. Both Old- and New-Testament attest to this experience. In fact, such is the basis for Jesus personally knowing the Christian. He said that His sheep hear his voice, he knows them, and they follow Him [John 10:27]. And, the Greek for that verse’s “the voice of me hear” is “ths phones mon akouousin”. It may also be translated as “the phonetic voice of me acoustically hear.” That is, it is experienced as a phonetic voice acoustically heard. It just doesn’t come as sound waves in the ears.

There is a Christian author who has recently written a book attesting to such an experience. In fact, it is a journaled record of a year’s such experience. The book is [Walking With God](#), by John Eldredge¹. Not only does it document a year’s worth of conversational intimacy with God, but it also analyzes what it is that God is accomplishing with the conversations.

This present paper is a synopsis of Eldredge’s book. That book absolutely confirms similar experience this writer has had since 1984. I praise God that Eldredge has written it. I believe that it is very timely. But, it is his analyses of God’s purposes

with Eldredge personally that this writer finds so valuable. It is a treasure of information about what God would like to do with each of us.

THE PURPOSES OF GOD.

The Journey of Faith.

Eldredge relates that there are two awakenings in the journey of faith of the Christian. The first is that God exists and He can't be ignored. A Christian has to deal with Him, ... personally. That is, the Christian must deal with a very personal God. The second awakening is that Satan exists, cannot be ignored, and must be dealt with personally. (It may not be the specific demon named Satan in the Bible, but one of the many demons who work for him.) Eldredge also states that these awakenings are uncommon among Christians. Unfortunately, that means that many Christians are asleep as to what is happening with them spiritually, here on Earth.

Eldredge cites God's promise to instruct, teach, and guide the believer in the way he shall walk [Psa. 32:8]. This promise of God applies to the believer's daily walk. And, it is in the context of daily protection for one who, like David, is "hidden" in the Lord. And, in this context, God cautions the believer to have understanding of what's going on. And, the Greek for this kind of understanding is as that Paul cited in [Col. 1:9]. That is, it is a putting together things that are spiritual.

Now, if God is the instructor in all the spiritual details of the believer's walk, then some kind of real-time communication between believer and God must take place. And, that's what Eldredge is getting at. It is to be verbal communication.

Hearing, Heart, and Healing – The Three Big Hs.

Eldredge reminds us of what Jesus said about hearing in [Mat. 13:15]. And, that is that if people would see with eyes, hear with ears, understand with heart, and be converted, then He would heal them. And, the Greek for "heal" means "make whole." There is a ton of information in that half a verse.

Eldredge's experience illustrates Jesus' words. That is, via hearing of the voice of the Lord, He works to make Eldredge whole, in terms of his heart. That is the whole message of the book. That is the bottom line. That's what Jesus does in real-time with a Christian who converses with Him. Eldredge gives a lot of very useful details about the process that went on for the reported year. And, from this we can get a more complete picture.

One of Eldredge's many examples of such hearing is when he had been asking for God's forgiveness of Eldredge's deep commitment to make life work on his own. He asked that God heal the places in Eldredge's soul that had for so long felt alone. And then he heard, "*My favor will never leave you.*" Now, is that just a thought that popped into his mind, or was that God's voice. In the rest of the book, relating the rest of such experiences, it becomes very obvious that it is God speaking directly into Eldredge's mind.

Eldredge talks about the Christian's "heart" throughout the book, without defining what the spiritual heart is. It isn't what's in the chest, although both Eldredge and I testify to feeling things there. For instance, when something goes instantly wrong, like in an airplane, I have felt a pang of fear in my physical heart. Somewhere in the book, Eldredge refers to the sternum, and I think this is what he references. So, what is the non-physical heart that we and the Bible talk about so much? Well, I know

it to be a part of the soul, which also contains mind and conscience. These soulish relationships may all be tracked down in the Bible, but this synopsis is not the place.

Viewpoint on Approach to Life – Part 1.

After a reasonable amount of time participating in God's conversational process, Eldredge discerned what God was doing with him. He was reorienting Eldredge in terms of his approach to life. As he comments, believers generally have backwards their view of the Christian life to be lived. God is not about providing us with a good life. Rather, God is about being "our all". And, Eldredge says, until then we are essentially subhuman, compared to how God created us.

So, what God wants to happen, via conversational intimacy with Him, is a fundamental reorientation of our approach to life. Our old ways are deeply woven into our personalities and core assumptions. And, our old ways are also rooted in our wounds. What God wants is to change all this. To me, it sounds like this reorientation is all about the 'new man' [2 Cor. 5:17], [Eph. 4:24]. For the reorientation shall work on the new creature who is in Christ. [2 Cor. 5:17]

Eldredge also says that when in conversational intimacy, the Lord wants something done, it cannot be put off. Otherwise, it will just go away. It's a matter of timing. So, events in the training process must be dealt with in God's timing, not the believer's. And, he also says that this is the only way to have a real relationship with Jesus, who will keep trying.

I can testify that this is true, as I experienced it, back in the '80s. In fact, the Lord put me through several training events until I got the idea. Then, those 'timing events' ceased. From that, I coined a describing phrase that says, "*We work for a just-in-time God on a need to know basis.*" He tells you just in time, what you need to know. And, He may not tell you all, but just what is needed to be effective at the time.

Forget the So-called 'Normal' Life.

Based on his experience with conversational intimacy with God, Eldredge says that such Christians don't get to live lives that are seen by the world as normal. Accepting that fact in the details of our lives is what allows us to remain in Jesus. On the path to God becoming our 'all', God reorients us to the fact that life is not about satisfying our desire for something. Because if we attain it, we may believe we've found life apart from God. And, we may believe that something we longed for is really needed in our life. When maybe it isn't.

But, God does not want us to hold on to an unfulfilled desire to have something. Eldredge says that may turn into an obsession. On the other hand, God also doesn't want us to just bury the desire, and hope it will go away. Because that's ignoring your heart, and it's dangerous. So, God sometimes reactivates a particular longing that you've buried. He does that so we'll deal with the issues underlying the desire. In this, the main issue is surrender of your heart to God. He wants your heart, and he wants you to fully understand your buried issues and desires.

Viewpoint on Approach to Life – Part 2.

Although God may not want to satisfy some of your specific desires, He does want you to be happy. In fact, he wants you to experience the joy of the Lord. For, the joy of the Lord is your strength [Neh. 8:10].

According to Eldredge, God gets a Christian into a position to enjoy the joy of the Lord, via a particular route. God uses a particular process. He sometimes disrupts our happy little lives, Eldredge says. So, a believer shouldn't tie his life and its happiness to things that can be lost. We can't be happy without holiness. And, we can't be holy without God. Happiness requires wholeness. And, wholeness requires holiness. But, wholeness is obtained via healing. And, Jesus heals those who hear Him [Mat. 13:15]. So, don't waste your pain, Eldredge advises. It's going to come.

THE PROCESS.

Something Called An "Agreement".

Once a Christian is hearing Jesus speak, and is into the conversational mode, the believer will soon be able to identify who is speaking to him. Is it himself? Is it Jesus? Or is it some demonic imposter? Because, if the believer can hear himself and Jesus, both speaking into his mind, he can also hear third parties. So, Satan's demons have to become clever in how they speak into a believer's mind. Remember Jesus' warning to be careful how you hear, not just what you hear [Luke 8:18].

Eldredge says that we all hold subtle convictions about ourselves and life, that we accept as true, and that are formed deep in our soul. And, he says, some of them come from demons. He calls them "Agreements".

These agreements with demons are about things that are not true. They are subtle, says Eldredge, masquerading as something else (like writer's block). Satan hopes we won't see such an agreement as a spiritual attack. But, he wants the agreement, because it gives him a demonic foothold, such as in [Eph. 4:26-27].

Demons seek out our trials, weaknesses, and unhealed places to obtain footholds. And, these footholds are obtained through agreements. Such footholds are like an open door to further demonic mischief. And, footholds are given to Satan by believers. So, the enemy secures an agreement, and then may go underground a while, so his work won't be easily discerned.

One of Eldredge's examples of an agreement is when something whispers into your mind, "*Life is never going to turn out the way you hoped*", and you respond, "*That's true.*" That's an agreement you've just made about something that is not true.

God, on the other hand, God seeks agreements with us, about what is true. But, we can't base our convictions on experiencing God's truth. In fact, it is arrogant to judge God's truth by our feelings about it. So says Eldredge.

Spiritual Warfare.

What Eldredge reveals is that God's process is to unravel and destroy the enemy's agreements that are affecting the believer. And, this is done by the believer employing the methods of Christian spiritual warfare, under the direction of God. In this writer's opinion, these two writings about agreements and spiritual warfare are Eldredge's most valuable contribution in this book. This is where it all comes together.

Peter, of course, said that spiritual attacks would come, and should be opposed [1 Pet. 5:8-9]. In such an attack, the enemy is present in the form of a foul spirit, that is, a demon, says Eldredge. He also cautions us to be careful, because we are vulnerable. The only safe place for our heart is in God. That is, in the Spirit [Rom. 8:9], and in Christ, which is how we do warfare in heaven [Eph. 1:10]. We should take care

to make no agreements with demons. Which means that we must identify the attack as such.

In fact, things work better if the believer can identify the demon, by name, says Eldredge. That may be done in one or more ways. First, the demon may be identified by his fruit. For instance, in which area of your Christian life is the attack coming? Suppose you have some responsibility in your church, and you're afraid that things are slipping out of your control. Then, that class of spirit is a spirit of fear [2 Tim. 1:7]. Added to your identifying of the fruit, you can also directly ask Jesus what you're dealing with. He may give you an even more specific demonic name.

Eldredge's sequence of warfare steps commences with cleansing yourself with the Blood of Christ. Next, submit yourself to God. That is, put the results of your warfare in His hands. Bring the Kingdom of God and the glory of Jesus against the spirit. (It's a verbal statement.) Then, command the evil spirit to leave [Jas. 4:7]. Do it out loud, in the Name of Jesus and by His delegated authority. Eldredge even says you can command the evil spirit to report to the throne of Christ.

Application to Counseling.

Eldredge spends some time talking about listening to Jesus on behalf of others. This is an obvious application to counseling, which Eldredge does. And, he says that it's easier to hear God's voice for someone other than for yourself.

Eldredge cautions, however, that when you want to speak to something in someone else's life, it is booby-trapped. Deep wounds are carefully defended. They are defended in accord with the agreements the other person may have made along the way. The booby-trap produces shame, anger, and withdrawal. But, there is information there. A Christian's out of proportion reaction is an important sign. It's a clue to what is really going on. When it's a demonic stronghold, you'll just awaken the guard dog, Eldredge says.

In a counseling situation, their warfare will try to transfer to you. An attack on the counselor may come, even beforehand, from someone else's battle. This is why the counselor's joy in the Lord is essential.

Resting in God.

Eldredge has some final advice about walking with God. And that is to rest in Him, as often as possible. That is, get alone with Him, without agenda. With nothing to be prayed over or fought. Just enjoy the peace and quiet of being with God. There's nothing else like it, says Eldredge.

It reminds me of back in the '80s, when all of this was new to me. Before light in the morning, I would spend time in a dark hallway in my local church, where I could peer out front and see the Cross. It was when God taught me to quiet the chatter of prayer I was sending up, without pausing to listen. He said to me, clear as a bell, "*Be still and know that I am God, ... and you are not.*" [Psa. 46:10]

CONCLUSION.

In this writer's opinion, this book is a definite 'buy', in the context of interpreting the end-times signs of the times. If the reader likes this one, then Eldredge has several others that may be of interest. But, since this one is heavy on spiritual warfare, there are probably two others that would also be of interest. They

are The Bondage Breaker by Neil Anderson², and Liberating the Bruised by Dr. Joe Allbright³. The latter can be ordered off Dr. Allbright's website

www.liberating-the-bruised.com

REFERENCES.

¹ Walking With God, by John Eldredge, Thomas Nelson, 2008, ISBN 978-1-4002-0290--4

² The Bondage Breaker, by Neil T. Anderson, Harvest House Publ., 1993, ISBN 0-89081-787-1.

³ Liberating The Bruised, by Dr. Joe Allbright, Order from website, above.