



Rick & Sue McCoy

The Love Letter

Abba's Arms International, Inc.
3rd Quarter Volume 17

Hearing and Listening to Our Father

Years ago, my relationship with God was very different. I (Sue) came to Him with my list of needs and did most of the talking. In some ways I treated Him more like a heavenly butler than the Almighty God of the universe! I have journeyed from a teenager knowing little of His heart to now finding the intimacy and joy of being in His Presence and listening to His heart! In the Garden of Eden, our Father planned for Adam and Eve to freely share their hearts with Him about anything, anytime! ***Prayer is really meant to be a two-way conversation*** between us and Him! He planned for us to have a relationship where our hearts are open and transparent with His. That leads to intimacy, trust, security, and a feeling of belonging or being at home! The further I walk and talk with my good Father, the more I find myself at peace and rest. Rather than deciding what to pray for or how to spend time with Him, I'm learning to be still, quiet myself, and open my heart and ears to listen and hear Him speak to me first! May we be like little children teachable and ready to learn His ways that leads to a life-giving relationship with Father God!

A Heart Relationship – Knowing and Trusting Him

Real prayer starts with our hearts open and at peace together in His Presence! It's important to learn Father's character and heart so we can trust Him. Recently, He spoke to my heart that since the Garden of Eden, ***"My children have thought they need to do something to merit time with Me and receive My love and direction!"*** The generation I grew up in often heard the words, ***"Children are to be seen and not heard."*** My dad was a good dad, but I believed he didn't have time to listen to my questions, and that I should already know how to do things. I had a wrong image of my dad. He didn't know how to connect to my heart or have time to listen to me. I also saw Father God that way with me.

However, our Father's door is always wide open ready to talk! He wants us to rest in Jesus' finished work, free of the need to do everything perfectly and aware that He can handle us even when we are messy!

Relationships take time and that is one common reason our busy generation is unable to draw near to God today. Making time to sit with someone or Father takes time to listen and hear their words and receive what's in their heart. Only when we truly know someone else's heart can we trust that person or Father! Do you know Him? The Bible tells us our God won't lie, He will never change, and He will never leave us. Read **Num. 23:19, Heb. 13:8, James 1:17, Heb. 13:5** Unfortunately, we live in a broken world where our parents or others haven't kept their words to us, and their actions may not have



shown us love. Instead, we have learned to distrust others, we struggle to believe Father will speak to us or really cares about the details of our lives. We may even question whether He is good and enjoys being with us. We must begin to believe what the Bible also says that we

are His delight! **Ps. 16:3**

We need to know His tender heart, faithfulness, and much more so we can behold or see Father just like Jesus did! Start by seeing Father through Jesus, who said, ***"...if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father!"*** **John 14:9** I am learning to live each day looking at Jesus and putting my trust in Him. The more I look at and behold my God, the more my heart and life are being changed by Him! In addition, when we hear Him speak His words to our hearts, we begin to know and believe who He is.

My Sheep Hear My Voice

Jesus stated that He is the good shepherd, and we are His sheep. He said His sheep hear His voice and follow Him. We are made with the ability to hear His voice as

sons and daughters in Father's family! Regardless of where we are or what we have done we can always hear His voice. Jesus lived His life on the earth hearing His Father and then speaking those words to others. How do we hear His voice? He speaks many ways - in His written Word, by the voice of the Holy Spirit, from other godly people that have walked longer with Him, through prophetic words, dreams, visions, and even songs! There are many voices in the world that can be loud, but God spoke to Elijah in a still, small voice!

1 Kings 19:12 He wants us all to know that He finds enjoyment in being with us! He spoke to my heart that since the Garden when Adam and Eve listened to another voice, we lost seeing His smile and the joy we bring Him when we make time to hear and listen to what He wants to say to us!

We all have natural ears, but what we are talking about here is having our spiritual ears open to hear His voice. Read **Matt. 13:15-16** Many people have heard Jesus' words, but they missed hearing His heart in the words! They were "casual" listeners lacking real interest or devotion. Unless we focus or give our total attention to someone, we will miss really hearing what they said. The words, "**hear,**" "**hearken,**" and "**attend to**" appear throughout the Bible. Do we take them seriously? "**Hearken**" means in both Webster's 1828 dictionary and in Hebrew, "**to give heed to what is uttered, to observe and obey; to attend to what is uttered with eagerness and curiosity.**" How much do we value hearing His words and choosing to walk in His ways? **Mark 4:24-25 NLT** says, "**Pay close attention to what you hear. The closer you listen, the more understanding you will be given – and you will receive even more. To those who listen to My teaching, more understanding will be given...**" That is our choice! He will always love us, but He reveals His secrets to those who seek Him and really listen to Him!

Be Still and Listen

We are told to "**Be still and know that I am God...**" **Ps. 46:10** Both David and Isaiah speak about the importance of waiting on the Lord, even all day long! **Ps. 25:5, Isa. 40:31** If we try to listen to someone talking when it's noisy with other people speaking, we will struggle to have our ears only hear Father's voice! In a quiet room, our mind and soul can let go of the things of this world and hear His voice much easier. Over several years, He has taken me from being a "**busy bee**" preoccupied with doing many worldly

things to learning to sit quietly and listen for His voice. In fact, this morning, I read a scripture verse, got totally quiet and let the Holy Spirit begin to reveal that verse to me. He gave me an image of how He is always covering me in His love, my past gone! Wow! His Presence was so sweet I didn't want to stop my time with Him!

The word, "**listen,**" means to "**give ear to, attend closely, yield to advice, to obey and to follow.**" When we choose to listen to God or someone, our hearts must trust and believe that they know more than we do. Our hearts must be willing to honor what they say which requires humility! Being humble requires submitting to someone you respect in a higher position of authority, or who knows more than you do. We must recognize that we don't know or have all the answers that we need. We must become like little children ready to be taught God's ways. Too often our flesh, soul, or Satan try to get us to believe lies about God's word so that we

live in unbelief. Our enemy wants us to doubt God's word or doubt that we can really hear God. Either way we lose the true image of who He is and who we are! Living from this natural world limits the abundant life Father always planned for us to live!

Hindrances to Hearing His voice

As I mentioned earlier, I would fill every minute of my day doing something. I would get my value and identity from what I did, not from who I was, His much-loved daughter! I spent time in the morning reading His Word and praying, but too often He showed me I didn't stay relational and listen or ask for His help the rest of my day. Ouch! And my time in the morning was more about me doing most of the talking. Many years ago, a man of God realized, "**Here I am doing all the talking to the One who knows everything!**" From that point on, I spent more time listening and hearing what God had to say and found his heart and life impacting me more than ever before!

If we never get quiet, and make time to listen, we will miss the sweet connection He always planned for His family! I recently listened to Leif Hetland, a man known as the Apostle of love to the Muslims, share about how he had been doing meeting after meeting and found his body getting sick. The Lord spoke to him and told him to "**slow down to catch up with God!**" I don't want to ever forget the importance of being still. When we sit with Him, the One who lives outside of time, we are experiencing what eternity is like. Wow! As we sit in His Presence, we take eternity into our inner man,



our spirit and then it can flow out and touch others! That thought has slowed me to down to experience eternity and His Presence!

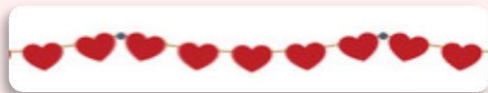
Another major hindrance can happen when we pray thinking we heard God, but things don't go the way we expected. We can get disappointed with our self or doubt God. When that happens, the enemy attempts to get us into guilt, shame, and feeling bad about ourselves. We may not even want to spend time with God anymore. Our past disappointments can cause us to ask "why" questions which stop our intimacy with God. John Eldredge said we can either have **God** or **understanding** when things don't go the way we expected. He decided to choose his intimacy with God over understanding! John now humbly knows he can't trust "self," and he focuses on his relationship with God over everything else! John then prays "I renounce the enemy's lies, and I humbly pray that You protect me from false darkness and deception. I know You still love me and I still love You!" We also need to believe in Father's love for us and trust His Word as the absolute truth in those times!

The Attitude of Our Hearts

Many years ago, Rick and I had the Lord tell us the attitude of our hearts was the most important thing! Pride or self-focus does not put Him in the place of honor that He

is due! Keeping our hearts tender towards Him and knowing He is only good and only has love for us allows us to trust Him in the times when life isn't easy or doesn't go the way we had expected. We stay humble like a little child and let Him teach us the things we still don't know or remind us of what we have forgotten. Living in awe of all that He is and having holy reverence or the fear of the Lord is how we attempt to posture our hearts.

The LORD saw David's heart attitude even before Samuel anointed him to be king of Israel. God looks on the heart, not outward appearances. David's heart attitude towards God is revealed in the words he wrote in several of the Psalms. **"... one thing have I desired of the LORD that will I seek." Ps. 27:4 "O God, You are my God; early I will seek You; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh longs for You." Ps. 63:1** If you read these Psalms and others, you can sense David's relationship with God was an essential part of his life. Even when he messed up, he turned and asked God to create in him a clean heart and not cast him away from His presence. **Ps. 51:10-11** May our hearts be more like David's and may we become more sensitive to hearing and experiencing all that Father always planned for His family now and forever!



Praise Report & Testimonies from our 6-week trip to Uganda, Kenya, and Zambia!

- ♥ We want to thank all of you that supported us with your prayers and finances!
- ♥ We ministered to around 1,900 people – 600 youth, 200 children, 250 pastors, wives, and leaders, and 850 adults in church services and meetings. We also provided over 3,200 meals.
- ♥ We sowed 140 copies of our 98-page -booklet that we wrote marriage into 250 pastors and wives. Several pastors have told us they're using the lessons to counsel and teach other couples.
- ♥ Many people were instantly healed of physical issues, and one lady, Jaja, was set free from demonic oppression and all pain in her body left! She hugged me and didn't want to let go!



Rick shared about how our hearts get wounded and how to release the debt others owed them through a gift of heart forgiveness. Many of the pastors, wives, and youth wept as they released the debt others owed them. Their hearts were healed, and relationships were restored and strengthened. One person said: **"We came almost separated but left holding hands again. This retreat gave us the tools and healing we needed to forgive and start over."**

Sue shared on the tender, comforting Motherheart qualities of our Father. Then we invited them to let our arms be His arms and remove the pain and hurts of the past with His comforting love. I (Sue) gave a comforting hug to a lady, and she didn't want to let go. Later she told me, **"My mother died when I was 3 years old and I had never experienced love until you hugged me! My heart feels whole, not the emptiness and pain of the past!"**



We had the couples sit knee to knee and look into each other's eyes, share what makes them feel loved, practice listening to each other and more. At the end of the 4-day marriage events, each couple renewed their vows, took communion together, and celebrated with a slice of cake! It was all very special! One man said, **"I haven't looked into my wife's eyes like this since we were dating. It has touched our hearts and rekindled our love!"** A woman said, **"I feel like a new bride!"** Another woman said, **"For the first time in years, my husband said 'I love you' with tears in his eyes. We are beginning a new chapter because of what we received here."**



Father's Blessing of Love for You!

I bless you to daily be make time to be still and get to know the One who loves you more than you have yet to experience. I pray He stirs your heart to desire a heart-to-heart relationship like David had! May He give you ears to hear His voice and direct your steps. May the past mistakes and disappointments be removed by Jesus' blood, so you are free to hear and receive His good plans for you. I bless you to hear Him speak His Word directly from His heart to yours so that it goes from written words to words that are alive in your heart that you can live by! I pray you get to know Him more intimately and trust His love even when you don't understand what's happening! May you rest hearing His heart and connecting with Him and His love forever!

