



LEARNING TO HEAR, TO LISTEN, AND TO FOLLOW

Linda Michel

It sometimes feels like my life is a book I am writing. or just a span of time with distinct stages. I realize that these chapters, stages or phases can be separated into a time when I could Hear God's voice, a time when I actually Listened to his voice and finally a time when I Heard his voice, Listened to what he said and faithfully Followed.

In my early years I Heard God's voice and it was a bit frightening. I always knew there was a God but I thought that He was a very big and scary God. I was able to see his hand on my life but it was easier for me to ignore him so I didn't have to acknowledge him and change my life. As time went on, I got to know him better and I began to actually Listen to what he was saying.

I was passionate about making a difference in the world. If I couldn't feel the passion in my work, I felt like someone had cut off my air supply. I was continually looking for passion and joy in what I did so I left the business world and began working in ministry. I was sure that God would give me a major ministry to be passionate about because He knew how talented and important, I was. You see I thought that I was God's gift to the church and I found out very quickly that the church was God's gift to me. The work He has given me has included a variety of responsibilities and He says "OK, you find the passion and joy in this." It was very humbling when I realized that one of my primary goals had been to have worldly recognition for myself.

I began to ask myself: "So, what does God want from me anyway?"

Micah 6:8 came to mind - *He has told you, O man what is good: and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God,*

So simple but not easy to do!

More recently, in this time of grieving for my sweet husband who passed away last year and COVID isolation, my entire life has been turned inside out. I was physically and emotionally devastated and I began a daily rehabilitation practice which included reciting the Lord's Prayer and saying the following affirmations:

1. I believe that God's promises are true
2. I believe that Heaven is Real
3. I believe that God will see me through
4. I believe that nothing can separate us from the love of God
5. I believe God has work for me to do

As prayed and spoke these positive statements, these affirmations acted as an anchor for my soul and a balm for my broken heart. I began to hear God whisper to me and I listened very carefully. I realized that I had nothing to offer him and he had everything to offer me. I found myself on my knees praying and realized that I wanted to follow Jesus, not just in word and deed but with my entire being.

I lifted up my palms and said "I am all In Jesus. Everything I have is yours. Use me as you see fit. My fondest desire is to glorify your name". I have always wanted my life to matter, to make a difference in this world but now it's for God's glory, not mine. Every morning I wake up and ask God to let me be a blessing to someone this very day. I walk slower now, talk softer and pay close attention so I don't miss the opportunities he sends my way.

My book isn't fully written but I trust the Lord to write each new chapter. As I Hear his loving voice calling me, I want to savor each word, sentence and paragraph. I will Listen carefully and Follow.



Linda Michel is a long time member, first at NCPC and then at Redeemer. She leads the Welcome and Hospitality Team at Redeemer and has blessed many with her warm spirit and grounded love.