

# Hearing God: Learning to Listen to the Spirit of God

A Four Week Summer Session for All

By Brad Bailey

## Session One

# How God “Speaks”

### Introduction

I believe that...**We all hear God.** The basis of this class is my confidence in that belief.

You hear God. That is why you are hear.

I also believe that the nature of hearing God is one in which we can tend to be too definitive or too dismissive. It's really common within a church community to have some who speak of hearing God is very common and confident ways...and others who wonder if they ever really hear God speak to them.

So I want to say at this very point of welcome... these weeks will serve across that spectrum.

This class is not a test of your faith...it is a time to enjoy God's presence.

### PRAY

God has spoken....that is why we exist.....why you exist.

There are no unseen lives.

God is love.

> Take a moment and if there is **any fear... release it....any anxiety ...release it.**

Welcome His presence... as it's own gift.

Sense His pleasure with your presence.

**Goal of Class:** To grow in our understanding and experience of hearing God... allowing greater personal communion and ministry to others.

While the brevity of this class will not expound upon Spiritual Disciplines, Spiritual Gifts, or all that is involved with “knowing God's will” in life, it will provide some foundational understanding that may serve all of these.

Our time will relate to all those because hearing God is foundational to all those.

Each week...

- **Understanding** - from the Bible and experience
- **Experience** - time “listening” as individuals and sharing the process with others in small groups

Session 1: How God “Speaks”

Session 2: Developing Our Spiritual “Hearing”

Session 3: Discerning God's Voice

Session 4: Partnering with God in His Ministry to Others

## How Does God Speak?

When we speak about God speaking...we generally just take our usual human ideas and lay them on God. It can sound strange to people around us...and maybe even a bit strange to some of us as well. So when we speak of God speaking... it helps to consider the very nature of God

So I want to begin by putting in place....

**Some truths about God to shape our understanding about how God speaks to us.**

Jesus explains this as he prepares his disciples at the end of his earthly ministry with them.

**John 14:15-19, 25-26 (NIV)**

*"If you love me, you will obey what I command. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another*

*Counselor to be with you forever--<sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.<sup>18</sup> I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.<sup>19</sup> Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ...<sup>25</sup> "All this I have spoken while still with you.<sup>26</sup> But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

**“the Father... will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.” – John 14:16**

Take a moment to REALLY hear this. All the comfort of Christ being present... all the counsel of Christ... is now present.

**“...he lives with you and will be in you.” – John 14:17**

**“the Father... will give you another Counselor to be with you forever ...he lives with you and will be in you.” – John 14:16, 17**

**1. God is Relational: We can hear God because He created us to be a part of His eternal love.**

Jesus is describing how God ... manifest in three persons... Father, Son and Spirit....are united in including you in relationship with their everlasting love... that commune and communicates.

**John 15:9: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.**

God created you in love... came to save you in love...and comes to live with you in love.

**Recognize that God has created you for a close relationship.** God's will is to be personally present with you and speaking with you as you go through life.

“We must understand that God does not "love" us without liking us.” - **Dallas Willard** [1]

Hearing God does not flow primarily from discovering formulas and techniques...but from relationship ...from communing with God in relationship.

So we do well not to simply want to “hear God” apart from desiring to truly seek the communal working of His Spirit. We may need to begin by considering our motives and desires. We may need to actually want relationship... with all that it brings.

“The main purpose for learning to hear God's voice is so that I might really know Him—His heart, His joys, His desires, His hurts, His character, His will.” – Mark Virkler [2]

**2. God is Spirit: God's communicates to our spiritual nature ... both through and beyond the boundaries of our physical and rational nature.**

The working of God's Spirit forms the physical realm (Genesis 1:1-2). These two realms are not opposites... but the spiritual transcends the physical. Once in harmony, now the created realm is separated from the eternal reign of God. The physical realm is in a state of death. Our understanding has become darkened... seeing only through a glass dimly.

God spoke prophetically saying...

*I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. - Joel 2:28-30*

Jesus explained that this was now what being fulfilled in the sending of the Spirit to live within those who receive him. (*John 14:15-17 & John 16:14*). *This began on the day of Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out into the lives waiting as Jesus had told them to. (Acts 2:1-2,4) [3]*

The Holy Spirit is at work in each of us who receive Christ. [4]

Jesus said the times had come when those who worship God must do so in “spirit and truth.” (John 4:24)

It has been noted that there are two Greek words in the New Testament that are translated “word”: logos and rhema. “Logos” tends to be used in speaking of the objective truth of God’s Word.... and “rhema” of the personal spiritual impartation of God’s Word. As such, the Scriptures can be both logos and rhema...logos in the fundamental truth of the content ...and rhema as God speaks personally to our spirits.

As Mark Virkler describes, “We need both logos and rhema. The content of the Bible (Logos) is necessary because it gives us an absolute standard against which to measure all “truth.” It is our safeguard to keep us from error, and our instruction manual for life. Rhema, or the voice of God, is Spirit-to-spirit communication—where the Holy Spirit, in union with your spirit, speaks directly to you.” [5]

Jesus spoke of people needing to “have ears to hear”... of in speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit, he speaks of the one who will impart truth. As Jesus described (John 14), the Holy Spirit is, truly and literally, God within us. So God speaks by His Spirit in relationship to our spirit.

**Hearing God involves developing an inner dialogue between our spirit and the Spirit of God.**

If you look to Hollywood for examples, you’d probably be expecting a big booming voice from the clouds. But in 1 Kings 19, God shows himself in quite the opposite way. Elijah waits to hear God and doesn’t hear Him in the wind, an earthquake, or a fire, but in a gentle whisper.

**God generally speaks to us by the Spirit’s inner voice that is distinct from our own thoughts, an inner image, that upon reflection or further revelation, offers meaning, a feeling that comes upon us (such as a peace, faith, etc), or a prompting that directs us.**

**The Spirit may also communicate through bringing a word from Scripture to mind, a dream or vision, words given by another, and in the context of praying for others, sympathetic sensations in your body.**

**What to listen for? Whatever tends to come from outside your own current ideas and thoughts. Mark Virkler describes this as “Spontaneous thoughts that light upon our mind”**

**We should embrace our own natural thoughts as potential God-given wisdom... and inner words, images, or senses “outside” our natural thoughts as a potential God-given “word.”**

Examples of...

- Our church building process – the night we were to prepare our offer... and spoke to me and says: “Offer the least”... which would mean giving up what we knew would be needed to secure it against the other bidders. Everyone shared a sense we should offer more...but we took that word in...offered the least we could...and a couple days later were told that they chose us...and then added...against higher offers.
- Praying for one of my children...ahead of his age in school...struggling...2<sup>nd</sup> grade...all my best thinking said yes... I spoke with friends...they shared the same basic natural thought...Leah and I prayer...with that decision already planned...and immediately God spoke into my mind.... “Let him rise up.” Wow. It’s not something I wanted to risk...but we did. At the final day of the school year...and as he won the award for most improved student...with outstanding grades...I wept at how God had transcended our understanding. He rose up. Now exactly ten years later he’s being accepted into top colleges I could never have imagined applying to.
- **EX – thyroid / boundaries**

**Embrace the freedom to listen “beyond your own understanding.”** Our faith is rational, but God is not bound by our understanding. Those of us that are more left-brain and analytical may find it helpful not to dismiss such a nature... but to embrace that there is a larger reality. Some of us **like the objective reality...  $2 + 2 = 4$** . But we do well to **stand back and realize...what is true and real is never defined by just a physical measurement.**

Our entire lives are lived out of what we understand physically as well as relationally and intuitively and spiritually. As such, knowing someone involves relating on a personal level. If you ask me to tell you about my wife...listing the names of the chemical compounds that she is made of would be a limited level of knowing her to say the least. The truth is that we all know through the inner experience of relational life. And part of how we relate to God is the same.

### **3. God is Gracious: So He will speak before and beyond what we deserve.**

In seeking to hear God...our hearts should focus on how powerful, profound, and precious is that which God makes known... rather than presuming that hearing God is something we can earn... or that serves as a way to confirm our worthiness.

Jesus was quite clear.

#### **Matthew 6:7-8 (NLT2)**

“When you pray, don’t babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!

#### **Matthew 7:11**

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

#### **1 John 3:1**

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

#### **Romans 8:16, 26-27**

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children....<sup>26</sup> In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.<sup>27</sup> And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

### **4. God is our Spiritual Father Forming His Nature in His Children: So His voice is often developing us more than just directing us.**

When we think about how God speaks... we can tend to think God wants to tell us what to do.

But that is not the nature of a Father. As a father, I want to help develop my kids...not just direct them. God doesn’t want to **program** us, he wants to **parent** us.

He wants to deepen not just our **intelligence** but our **intimacy**, moving from **information to formation**, from **knowing to growing**, from **head to heart**, from **accepting to understanding**.

***As our Father... we should realize He is not usually going to tell us the what and who and when of life’s choices...but the how.***

Ex – On the morning of the day I planned to ask my wife Leah to marry me.... Prayed... “Lord, is Leah the one I’m to marry?” Immediately I heard God speak in my mind, “You are ready to commit the rest of your life to someone.” I already had total peace about her being a great life partner...so God spoke to something that spoke even more deeply. God spoke as the ultimate Father...not simply declaring a decision...but developing me.

God is parenting us; helping us to develop as spiritual adults.

God is at work to form his nature in me... the nature of Christ.

God is at work... doing something that is often very different than what I am seeking from Him.

***We may want God to tell us what the right decision is, but God will most often be more interested in the formation of his children than the dictation of decisions... and more likely to speak into “how” we live than simply “what” we do.***

The best of parenting will not simply tell their child what career to choose or who to marry... but rather develop the wisdom to discern such choices. They know that what matters more is how we work more than what job we have...and how we live out a marriage relationship more than “who” we marry. And it should be no surprise that the Bible never gives any impression that God has or wants to do that.

So we should expect and welcome God to speak **into the process ...not just the choices.**

The real fruit God seeks...is the fruit of the Spirit.

“...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, Fruit of the Spirit “ - **Galatians 5:22**

While the manifestations may serve as "signs", it is the lasting "fruit" by which we will be known. (Eph. 3:14-19; John 15:9-17; Gal. 5:22; Matt. 7:16-20; 1 Cor. 13)

We do well to grasp the emphasis that the Apostle Paul grasped so well...which is what God is seeking to do IN us.

**5. God is Unchanging: So He doesn’t simply speak new truth but about fresh application.**

**Numbers 23:19**

God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind.

**Malachi 3:6**

"I the LORD do not change."

**James 1:17**

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

**Isaiah 40:8** The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever."

God is unchanging. His mind is eternal... His heart is eternal... His purposes are eternal.

What does that imply to us?

It means that while we may have a fascination with discovering something new... God is more like the patriarch who is seeking us to align with what is unchanging... with who He is and what He has already set forth.

As Mark Virkler describes, “We do not simply read the Bible as a lifeless book with black print on white pages, but we experience it as alive (see Heb. 4:12). God “illumines” or quickens it to our hearts as we pray for a spirit of revelation (see Eph. 1:17). We do not just pray according to our own desires; rather, God

“burdens” our hearts to pray in harmony with His will. God has sent His Holy Spirit into our hearts, crying “Abba Father” (Rom. 8:15), so that we can have a direct ongoing love experience with Him.” - Virkler, Mark. 4 Keys to Hearing God's Voice (p. 23).

## **6. God Inhabits a Larger Reality: So God’s voice will often challenge and expand our faith.**

Romans 10:17

“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”

God wants to lead us into the reality of His Kingdom. So He is going to lead us into that which requires trust.

He may speak to us about going to someone to ask forgiveness...that we can't imagine doing.

He may speak to us about giving beyond what we can imagine.

He may speak give us a word for someone else that we can't imagine will make sense to them.

So if we want to hear God...we **need to loosen our comfort zone**.

## **7. God is Uniting us as the Interdependent Body of Christ: So don't focus on comparing ...but enjoy contributing whatever the Spirit gives you.**

### **Ephesians 4:6-7, 13 (CEV)**

There is one God who is the Father of all people. Not only is God above all others, but he works by using all of us, and he lives in all of us. Christ has generously divided out his gifts to us....<sup>13</sup> This will continue until we are united by our faith and by our understanding of the Son of God. Then we will be mature, just as Christ is, and we will be completely like him.

## **Time to Listen**

### **1. Listening to the Spirit Speak through Scripture (Lectio Divina)**

As many have experienced, God will speak to us through Scripture in a way that is often personal. The Spirit may illuminate a particular word or phrase... and speak afresh into our souls. The early church enjoyed the common practice of what is often referred to as “Lectio Divina,” which is Latin for divine reading, spiritual reading, or “holy reading.” It involves choosing a Scripture and bringing ourselves before God to speak through it.

**Bring ourselves before God.** - We begin with taking time to slow down... sit comfortably... bring ourselves before God... and prepare to listen.

**Listen to the Scripture – allow a word or phrase to be illuminated.** - The Scripture is read slowly ...often twice. Take in each portion of the reading, constantly listening for the “still, small voice” of one word or phrase that somehow says, “I am for you today.” The phrase or word may not jump out, but reveal itself slowly. Choose that word or phrase...and let it speak afresh to your soul.

**Let the word or phrase speak.** - Listen to the Scripture slowly another time...and this time contemplate what God is inviting you to do. What do you think is being communicated, what is God trying to tell you, what is revealing itself through scripture?

### **Luke 10:38-42**

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.<sup>39</sup> She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.<sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”<sup>41</sup> “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things,<sup>42</sup> but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Other recommended passage for Lectio Divina:

Matthew 7:13-14; Psalm 23\*; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 22:39-44; John 15:1-6; John 15:7-11\*; John 15:12-17; Philippians 2:1-13; Luke 10:38-42; Matthew 5:14-16

2. Small groups: Pray for one person in the group (...whoever volunteers) and listen and share what you sense.

### **Between sessions as able and led:**

- Begin to create daily time of stopping and becoming present to God. See Him alongside you (He is Immanuel, God with you), and staying tuned to spontaneity all day long. The Bible calls this abiding in Christ (see John 15:4) or “praying without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17).
- Review and reflect on the points from Session One.
- Explore more from potential “Additional Resources.”

### **Additional Resources:**

To speak about how we relate to and hear from God involves some degree of diversity in experience and style. As such, each of the following offer some valuable but different insights.

#### **Dallas Willard - [Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God](#)**

Dallas was a Professor of Philosophy at USC whose writing on Christian spirituality have had perhaps the widest and deepest impact in the past century. (He passed onwards from this life in 2013.) His book *The Divine Conspiracy* restored an understanding of what it meant to follow the way of Jesus in spiritual life and practice. He also became a partner in the Vineyard movement and personal influence. This earlier work on “Hearing God” shares the qualities of thinking deeply about what life with God involves. If one can set aside expectations of a simple “three step” manual for hearing God...and welcome a voice that speaks from deep relationship, this will serve your soul.

#### **Mark Virkler - [4 Keys to Hearing God](#) - You Can Hear God's Voice!**

Mark Virkler has been teaching at large for decades and helped multitudes in hearing God. I have personally valued his insights and general encouragement but would also note that his “process” may be over-simplified / over-stated, some use of Scripture is “bent” in making a point, and I would not endorse some of the “prophetic” ministries he aligns with. However, he has a valuable journey and process to share. This particular resource is the most succinct and is available for free across downloadable videos. His parallel work “Dialogue with God” is described as the more “right brain” (less informational) version of similar material.

#### **Getting to Know God's Voice: Discover the Holy Spirit in Your Everyday Life (A 31-Day Interactive Journey) by Jenny Randle**

I have not read this work but from what I have read of it, it would appear to be among the most practical and helpful works on hearing God, that is developed into a 31 day journey... combining short studies and experiences.

### **Notes:**

1. Dallas Willard, [The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God](#)
2. Virkler, Mark. *4 Keys to Hearing God's Voice* (p. 22). Destiny Image

3. *When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:1-2,4*

4. See Appendix: The ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit is SHARED by all who receive Christ.

5. Virkler, Mark. 4 Keys to Hearing God's Voice (pp. 97-98). Destiny Image.

## **Appendix:**

### **The Ongoing Ministry Of The Holy Spirit Is SHARED By All Who Receive Christ.**

The Holy Spirit is part of God's personhood (Father, Son, Spirit.) As the Son of God serves as the reconciling life between God and humanity, so the Spirit of God serves as the reconciling power by exalting, extending, and empowering the life of the Son in the world. Everyone who receives Christ is in-dwelted by Holy Spirit. (Matthew 3:11; John 3:5-8; John 14:15-27; John 16:5-15; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 1 John 4:13-15)

*On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. John 7:37-39*

*For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 1 Corinthians 12:13*

This continuous work of the in-dwelling Spirit may be complimented by experiences of heightened presence or "in-fillings" of special empowerment. (Luke 1:35,41; Luke 4:18; Luke 11:11-13; Acts 4:8, 31; Acts 9:17; Acts 11:28; Ephesians 5:18)

Sometimes the idea of a second "baptism in the Holy Spirit" and the significance of speaking in "tongues" can lead to confusion and even alienation. Some thoughtful interpretation of scripture may help clarify these areas of confusion. In the book of Acts there are three subsequent groups which are similarly "baptized" in the Holy Spirit as a sign to the first disciples \ church leaders declaring God's intent to include all people in the ministry of the Gospel. (Acts 8 - Samaritans who were only partly Jewish; Acts 10 - Gentiles; Acts 19 - Disciples of John the Baptist.) These transitions do not make a change from a "carnal" state to a "spiritual" one, but from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant under which a new work of God ushered an invitation to all humanity to be His people. Moving beyond that initial historical context, the idea of a "second baptism" in the Holy Spirit as a sign-event develops into a broader understanding of a more continuous "filling" as a strengthening experience. Those first filled with the in-dwelling Spirit at Pentecost note continued experiences of special in-fillings. The ongoing work of the Spirit is understood as God's ever-present source from which we are to "drink" (1 Cor. 12:13) and "walk-in" (Gal. 5:16); an alternative controlling power to drunkenness for which we are told to "be filled" (Eph. 5:18 using the present tense to imply more than a one time experience.) Similarly, speaking in foreign "tongues" is no longer understood as a "sign" but as one "gift" among many (1 Cor. 12, 14.)

Therefore, rather than noting a particular experience that sets apart some believers into a different class of believers, we believe all who receive the work and person of Christ into their hearts are to seek an ongoing intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit, discovered in both our personal and shared settings.

We should approach and anticipate further experiences of the Holy Spirit's power out of a deep abiding SECURITY rather than as a means to security.



Our experience with the Spirit's power and gifts does not establish our relationship with our Father God, but rather is an outworking of that relationship, serving to strengthen us in our calling. (Romans 8:15-16) Rather than the anxiety of being "left out" or "let down," let us go forward in the joy of our salvation and receptive to God's presence.

*Luke 10:17-20 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*

## **A People of Word and Spirit**

The role of the Holy Spirit, and particularly the nature of God "speaking," raises issues about the relationship between the role of the Bible as "God's Word" ...and the role of God's Spirit speaking to us.

We hold to what the Bible clearly teaches, which sets the Scriptures apart as distinctly trustworthy in their Spirit-inspired testimony.... as well as the ongoing relationship by which we share communion with God by His Spirit at work within us.

We believe that God has never been "bound within Scripture" ... but has rooted his revelation distinctly in Scripture so as to set forth that which is foundational... a plumbline which serves to provide alignment for all understanding.

God has rooted His revelation of Himself in the uniquely inspired testimony of Scripture... but He is not bound within it.

These two facets have been likened to the role in boating of both a Rudder and Sail. These two work together to move forward toward the destination.

(The subjective nature of hearing what is spiritual in nature can naturally raise some concerns. We will explore the process of discernment more in future a future session.)

## ***When God Talks Back – An Anthropologist Affirms the Potential of Larger Reality***

A few years ago, a book came out that captured some attention across some social science circles. It was entitled ***When God Talks Back***...and was the result of research by a professor of Anthropology at Stanford.... Dr. Tanya Luhrmann. (She was educated at Harvard...and then did her doctorate at Cambridge.... taught at University of Chicago... then UCSD and finally is at Stanford.)

She had spent several years studying the more esoteric religious groups...and became challenged by what was distinct in the way Christians... related to God. So during her time in Chicago she began communing with a Vineyard church ...then at Stanford....did a research using the Palo Alto Vineyard. The pastor was a friend of mine here when he served as the Inter-Varsity director at UCLA...and then went to Stanford with Inter-Varsity... and then transitioned to become the pastor of the Vineyard there in Palo Alto. Professor Luhrmann spent a year or two in the life of the church...and openly welcomed to conduct research.

After concluding her research and book, at her open meeting with the Vineyard Palo Alto group, she read from her book's final chapter [1] :

***"I have said that I do not presume to know ultimate reality. But it is also true that through the process of this journey, in my own way, I have come to know God."***

In a subsequent TED Talk at Stanford, she says she learned that such groups don't think of the mind as a fortress bound withing your own self-generated thoughts...but a place we can meet with God.[2]

She said...***"It's a very 21<sup>st</sup> century thing, to draw the inference, that if you are using your imagination you are doing something false."***

*Her point can be vital. The great minds of human thought have seen the human imagination as a connection to a larger reality.*

Another secular anthropologist... wrote a review of the book [3]... in which they shared how this helped them to see the reality of the true believers around them. They wrote:

***There is the “real” of manifest materiality. But as philosophers, social scientists, physicists, and others have argued, this leads to an exceedingly narrow definition of reality that excludes many dimensions of human experience. Moving up a level of abstraction, we might say that the “real” also includes things—like gravity, or love—that we cannot directly perceive but whose effects we can experience. I cannot see or touch gravity, but I believe it exists because of how it affects the things I can see and touch. And much as gravity works on the scale of galaxies and atoms simultaneously, Evangelicalism views God’s presence as unproblematically multidimensional. God runs the universe and He cares if I lie.***

Together they affirm that the process of opening our imaginations to God is actually a significant part of reality.

*That is what God has done in making Himself known... using imagery and metaphors and guidance and prophets... they allow the larger reality to be further understood.*

*And ultimately... we are relating to that which is not less than material...but more than material.*

#### **1 Corinthians 2:9-10**

***As it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"-- but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.***

***“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.” - Romans 8:26***

*And this is what we as a Vineyard...value... our desire is to embrace God’s personal presence... without imposing it with manipulation.*

*We are embracing the larger reality with all of the humility that comes as those who know themselves to be part of that which only “sees through a glass dimly.”*

We also do not seek what is merely spiritual ...but a relationship with the one true and living personal God.

Notes:

1. From Stanford magazine - [here](#)
2. When God Talks Back | Tanya Luhrmann | TEDxStanford - Jun 29, 2015 - [here](#)
3. Rebecca J. Lester is Associate Professor of anthropology at Washington University in St. Louis - [here](#)