



"When God is Silent"

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

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A few weeks ago I received an e-mail from a friend in London. He has been seeking the LORD on some very important and strategic matters. Others for whom he prays have breakthroughs and amazing answers from God; he wrestles and watches for revelation, but it seems to allude him. He searches and ponders and wonders, like all believers, what causes such seeming silence from the Lord despite serious prayer and fasting.

I thought I would answer this in a message, because I know I've been there and I know at some point in the life of a true believer, there will be times when God is silent. The feeling is that of frustration, exasperation, dearth, like the picture above. The silence can be deafening, as in the life of Job. (In the book of Job, there is no response from God to Job until chapter 38.)

"Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now your loins like a man: for I will demand of you, and you answer Me. Where were you...." (Job 38:1-4a)

It's times like these that we feel like our faith just ran out the bottom of our feet. We're tempted to doubt; hey, we wrestle with the doubt factor. We're tempted to drift, if not into rank unbelief, at least into despair. We query, "Do we want God, or do we want something from God? What are we looking for?"

God is the great communicator. He speaks all the time, through creation (Psalm 19:1-2; Romans 1:18-20), through His Word (Matthew 4:4), through others, through circumstances, etc. (See, for example, Luke 1:5-38, II Samuel 24:10-25, Genesis 40:1-23, Daniel 2:1-45, Acts 9:10-18, Exodus 7:8-11:10, and Numbers 22:21-35.) We hear a sermon or radio message, read an article, see something on T.V. or discover something on the internet. A friend shows up at the door or telephones. Something comes in the mail, or in an e-mail, like this one. But when God is seemingly silent, it creates a hunger to hear, a hunger for Him, and an increasing desire to discover His Voice in His written Word. **There are some things we can do, and some questions we can ask.**

1. Let's begin with God's written Word. Are we hearing that? Can we start with the directions God has already provided in writing? The Word of the LORD stands forever.
2. Usually, when we desperately seek God for answers, we examine our own life. Most Christians know that sin separates from a holy God. We are not to stay there, however, focused just on ourselves and manifest sin. We need to ask God to examine our motives. We need to ask

for meekness and check our attitudes. Many think about 1 John 1:9 relative to confessing sin, but it also says that God is faithful and just to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. This is not just some outward ritual cleansing, but the purging of one's conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Hebrews 9:14. Look at this:

I cried unto Him with my mouth, and He was extolled with My tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me; but verily God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which has not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me. Psalm 66:17-20.

Don't stay there even. Begin examining the life of Christ. Read the Messianic Psalm 22.

3. Ask, "What is God saying to me in His silence?" A. W. Tozer talks about God being free and how we must accept God's sovereignty. Job 2:10; Job 13:15. God doesn't release His providential control. To take this prerogative to ourselves is robbery.

Habakkuk had a problem with how God deals. He stepped forward with his concerns before God and then braced himself for God's reply. He wondered if God even cares. [God does care. 1 Peter 5:6, 7.] Something happened within his heart when he realized that God is not accountable to any man and is under no obligation to comply with our ideas about this and that.

The LORD is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him. Habakkuk 2:20.

We need to be silent before God and listen to Him! God gave Habakkuk a vision of words.

Behold his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith. Habakkuk 2:4

4. Pay attention to the silence. God is in fact doing something. It might be something He's doing inside of us before He makes us aware of His plan. Go back to basics. Remember the LORD our God. Remember His so great salvation in Jesus Christ. Remember the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us. Remember what eternal life is (John 17:3) and what is important in life. Remember God's triumphs. Psalm 18:29; Psalm 92; 2 Corinthians 2:14; Colossians 2:13-15, e.g.

5. Disarm the enemy through confession. Whether there is known sin to confront or false accusations, come into agreement with God's Word. Do a personal history search to see whether any bargains and deals were made with God. Check for "great swelling words" spoken or sung, e.g., "I surrender all," "I have given everything to You," or "I have served You with all I am faithfully," or "I love You so much that I will _____," etc. God has the right to test our words, every idle word. (Matthew 12:36) If our own words have gotten us in trouble, we need to confess it in all humility. Walk away from spiritual pride. For a free copy of the "Disarming the Enemy" prayer, go to <http://www.marycraig.org/NewsViews/DisarmingTheEnemy.htm>.

6. Submit to God. There's a war going on. Ask yourself whose side you are on. We are enemies of God whenever we sin, whenever we are walking in pride, whenever we are friends of the world, whenever we participate in the works of darkness which Jesus came to destroy, whenever we are walking in the flesh and not walking in the Spirit, whenever we are opposing Jesus Christ, taking sides with Satan, etc. If we've strayed, drifted, ignored, or doubted, we need to ask God to grant repentance in the acknowledging of the truth in order that we might recover ourselves from the snare of the devil, holding us captive at [or to do] his will. (2 Timothy 2:25, 26)

7. Simply put, trust. God may be moving us from faith to trusting Him in times of trials. Faith deals with more specifics; it has objects—faith in what or in whom? Faith deals with things like God’s promises, power, provision, and, yes, God... Trust moves us closer to God Himself, His Person, nature, and ways. It is more comprehensive as we rest in Him, who He is. I AM.

In my own life, it has been more difficult to simply trust God because of who He is. But as I have seen God through the Scriptures and experienced God through life, it gets easier...not perfect, but easier. Proverbs 3:1-12; Philippians 4:4ff.

8. Think about this. Maybe God’s silence is indicating trust in our relationship with Him. Think about John 11 and Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Jesus is seemingly silent. Where is Jesus? Did He care? Was He neglectful? Does He fail to keep His promises? But again, God is sovereign. Jesus did His Father’s will, not that of Mary and Martha. Colossians 1:16.

9. Keep talking to God. If we are His, God is listening. God is speaking to us in the silence. After talking to Him, listen. Ask what God is speaking in the silence. Silence speaks when words cannot. Maybe this is how He is getting our attention.

God’s silence may be one of pleasure. His silence may be drawing and preparing you to hunger and receive a deeper revelation. Oswald Chambers

10. God may be trusting us with a silence of pleasure. Perhaps He sees that we can withstand an even bigger revelation. Perhaps He is bringing us into the mainstream of His purposes. Let’s praise Him for His sovereignty. Matthew 7:9; John 6:35.

His silence is the sign that He is bringing you into an even more wonderful understanding of Himself. Oswald Chambers

There’s something about God’s stillness and the quiet of silence. Over time it teaches us to have a quiet confidence in Him. Silence is a sign of a relationship of “knowing,” the *oida* kind of knowing that speaks best in silence. Zephaniah 3:17.

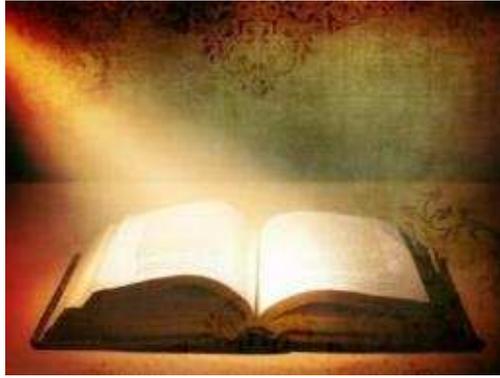
Listen, watch, and prepare. Let’s be ready to receive. Let God move us into a position where He can bless us more.

11. Reflect on God’s faithfulness. Psalm 22:4-10; Psalm 105, e.g. How has God been faithful to keep covenant up to now? Have we come to the place where we can be thankful in every circumstance, count it all joy whenever we go through various trials of our faith? Press on!

12. Be honest. God gave us psalms of lament through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the book of Lamentations to properly express our feelings and innermost thoughts to Him. Pray them; pray God’s Word back to Him. I always encourage people to include others while we are praying; max it out. Maybe God wants us to discover Him in His Word and be rid of the God of our own mind and making. Try these to start: Psalm 13, Psalm 139, Psalm 141, and Psalm 142.

Maybe God wants to demonstrate His graciousness to us in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, to cause us to have a true gospel to preach, and a real and blessed hope within our hearts, to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. What do you think?

This may seem trite, but my mother used to tell me in the middle of my exasperating tension that in ten years I would only have a bare memory of whatever was so important at the moment. Then she would look at me and say, “This too, will pass.”



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Living by His grace, for His glory,

Mary Craig

Mary Craig, D P. M.

www.marycraig.org

Unto You will I cry, O LORD my rock;

Be not silent to me: lest, if You be silent to me,

I become like them that go down into the pit.

Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto You,

When I lift up my hands toward Your holy oracle.

Psalm 28:1, 2

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