



Speak, Lord, in the stillness, While I wait on Thee;  
Hushed my heart to listen, In expectancy.

Speak, O blessed Master, In this quiet hour;  
Let me see Thy face, Lord, Feel Thy touch of Power.

For the words Thou speakest, They are life indeed;  
Living bread from heaven, Now my spirit feed!

All to Thee is yielded, I am not my own;  
Blissful, glad surrender, I am Thine alone.

Speak, Thy servant heareth, Be not silent, Lord;  
Waits my soul upon Thee For the quickening word.  
(E. May Grimes)

# Listening *perspective*

People and institutions are queued up, eager to influence the way we think and behave. Television sitcoms, commercials, talk shows on radio and TV, films, magazines and books—including, admittedly, this publication—are in the business of presenting images and arguments for our life decisions.

Men and women have always been spiritual beings. But modern culture, in its zeal to eliminate divisive influences and create a self-sufficient, 'enlightened' society, has ignored this fundamental truth. Along with denying God, today's social visionaries have denied man's intrinsic need for God.  
(Charles Colson)

It isn't that we actually *hate* God. It's not necessarily animosity we are demonstrating when we disregard the things of God. The reason that we permit the counsel of others before the counsel of the Almighty is that it is easier—and it is easier because we remain people of the dust.

When Christ enters our earthly life, He sends the Holy Spirit to assist us throughout the remainder of our temporal walk. The Spirit takes possession of our eternal components, hooking up, as it were, our permanent umbilical to God.

But our physical self remains earth-bound—not unaffected by the Spirit, but also not in His total possession. So the inner tension is established, as the apostle Paul so

eloquently and ironically describes in his own life:

For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice

the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

(Romans 7:14-25)

So while our eternal soul is in the possession of the Lord, the machinery of our existence remains tied to the dust from whence we came. The pumps and tubes that keep the body alive pump with the same fluids that sustain the unregenerate; the gears and pistons that move us about are the same; and the emotions and yearnings that motivate the body to action can be the same as those who do not know Christ.

We cannot escape the voice of the earth; short of hermitic seclusion in an isolated cave, it is impossible to avoid the siren song of this world. Try as we might, it will find us. Even if we vowed to never again attend a movie, watch television entertainment, or listen to music—even if we restricted the world’s input to the news headlines, we would still be submerged into a toxic bath of our society’s value judgments, priorities, passions and enticements.

All the more reason, then, for us to make a point of listening *first* to the word of God. At a minimum, we must counterbalance the “wisdom” of the world with the true wisdom of God. But our goal is Spiritual maturity; our purpose is not balance, but real growth in the things of heaven. Our goal is not simply to give equal time, but to gain Christ’s superior perspective on our existence.

### *corrective lens*

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul compares the imperfect vision we have now to that which we will enjoy once we have seen the Lord “face to face” in heaven.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

(1 Corinthians 13:9-12)

We could borrow this illustration to describe the improved perspective we gain—even while here on earth—when we develop the habit of listening to God before anything else. Like a person with poor eyesight putting on his glasses, suddenly the darker intentions of the world become clear when seen through the corrective lens of God’s word.

So every day that begins by putting on God’s spectacles has the advantage of His vision. Every disappointment, every crisis and trial, is seen not with the myopia of the world, but with the broad sweep of God’s peripheral vision. Every moment of happiness and joy, every mountain-top victory as well as every quiet pleasure is seen not as a personal triumph, but as one extra moment of reward enjoyed in God’s kingdom.

In driving piles, a machine is used by which a huge weight is lifted up and then made to fall upon the head of the pile. Of course the higher the weight is lifted the more powerful is the blow which it gives when it descends. Now, if we wish to impact our age and society with ponderous blows, we must see to it that we are uplifted as near to God as possible. All our power will depend upon the elevation of our spirits. Prayer, meditation, devotion, communion, are like a windlass to wind us up aloft. It is not lost time which we spend in such sacred exercises, for we are thus accumulating force, so that when we come down to our actual labor for God, we shall descend with an energy unknown to those to whom communion is unknown.

(Charles H. Spurgeon)

### *living higher*

Those who reject Christ are afraid that they will lose something valuable by trusting in anything beyond the familiar soil of earth. In truth, however, in so doing they would have everything to gain. The one who lives higher gains God’s limitless vision and perspective. The one who hopes in the Lord

has fewer reasons to hope in anything—or anybody—of this temporal plane.

The reluctance of some to live this way is really not surprising for, after all, what this type of living really entails is surrender, a frightening—even repulsive—contemplation for many. To “wait upon,” to “hope in,” to “wait for” the Lord means that we surrender our shortsighted, immediate aspirations to His limitless, eternal promises, and some people simply can’t wait. We live in a world of immediate gratification—a world in which something’s value diminishes exponentially with every minute one must wait for its realization. Most people today haven’t the patience to “wait for the Lord.”

But God is more generous than that; He doesn’t make us wait for everything. This promise is as much for today as it is for tomorrow, and eternity. Those who place their trust in the Lord of heaven receive an immediate result; He is a living God who is surely as alive in this minute as He is in the boundless minutes of our tomorrows. He doesn’t want us to only live with Him tomorrow, but today!

We place our life’s savings into the hands of the banker. Before we leave the premises, we shake his hand. That handshake represents his promise that when we return our money will still be there in the vault—plus interest. God came to earth in the person of Christ to put flesh on His promise of salvation—to, as it were, extend His hand to solidify the promise. God’s hope is not a yearning that something might occur, but a promise that something *will*. And that something is our redemption in His Son, and the promise of an eternity with Him.

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