

Change your mind! and get a new world view

Have you ever been incredibly frustrated with God? Needing answers to questions that are just not forth-coming?

“What should I do?”

“Where should I go?”

“Who should I talk to?”

“Why doesn’t God answer?”

Maybe it is not God...maybe it is you. Maybe the way you do life is causing you to enter into discussion with God the wrong way. Have you ever considered that your belief system could be influencing you to ask the wrong questions?

Here is a simple test to take when God is silent - ***change the topic***. Maybe God just doesn’t want to talk about what you want to talk about. Ask Jesus about a friend of yours, about your church, your family...pray for someone other than you or your current need and see if God speaks...I bet he will.

What does this mean? It means you need to change the way you see your relationship with God from a Western/ Modern grid to a Hebrew/ Early church grid. Take a look at the diagram below before we continue onward.

Hebrew/ Early Church Worldview vs. Modern/ Western Worldview

#1) Seeking God (Jer. 29:13).	Knowledge
#2) Process -over time, pondering (Prov. 25:2)	Information -tell me what I need to know
#3) Guided Journey (John 16:13)	Right Answers
#4) Relationship with God	Procedure -just tell me what I need to do!
#5) Intimacy	Law -living by a set of rules

#1) *Seeking God vs. Knowledge*. In the western worldview we want a clear answer so we can take precise action. Wisdom is knowing how to apply knowledge. In the Hebrew worldview wisdom is this:

“Let the wise listen, and let the discerning get guidance- (*for what purpose?*) for the understanding of proverbs and parables, the sayings and the riddles of the wise.
Prov 1:5-6

Thus, dreams, visions, and parables are a very important part of God's language. This type of symbolic language has a purpose: ***it tests your heart.*** Do you just want an answer or do you want to spend time being with God in relationship until he reveals the answer to your spirit? (1 Cor 2:9-11). When you are knowledge based, it can be very hard to permit yourself the time it takes to seek.

#2) *Process vs. Information.* In our Western/ Modern thinking we want knowledge to gather information. Information to know what to do with our lives, where we should live, who we should marry...Knowledge is important because it allows us to collect information so that we know what to do. In this system **Us** knowing what to do is the important thing!

In the Hebrew worldview, it is not about knowledge or information it is about a process, about being changed over time, it is about the journey...and pondering on the way. In fact, this is how the New Testament church was born...read the story of Peter and the Gentiles in Acts 10 and you will see very little knowledge or information being given to Peter to perform his task: He was given a symbolic vision he didn't know what to do with, told three people were going to show up, but not told they were not Jews, then these three people ask him to come and speak the words he had supposedly been commanded to speak! Do you remember Peter being told any words that he was to speak? Absolutely not! Peter had to walk out a process, to ponder over time, to be changed by the journey until he could see what he was supposed to do.

To a prophet, it was the journey that changed you. Think about the children of Israel in the desert; they could have made it to the Promised Land in a week and a half. Why the long route? As the old saying goes, God could take Israel out of Egypt, but then he needed to take Egypt out of Israel. The desert was all about a process of change that Israel needed to walk through until they could get their questions about the Promised Land answered. God couldn't send the people back to Egypt like they wanted because they would be slaves again...in life and in their thinking. God could not bring the people forward into the Promised Land because of their fear and mistrust; before the people could move forward God had to take the children of Israel through a process of change.

#3) *Guided Journey vs. Right Answers.* We want the right answers! In our culture, they are very important. By the time you are done high school you have taken approximately 2300 tests, all reinforcing the idea that *getting it right* is rewarded and *getting it wrong* is punished. Unfortunately, we unknowingly take this worldview into our walk with God. We want knowledge, to build our information, to get the right answer, so we do it right for God. Think about it...how important is it to Western Christians to do things right for God?

In the bible we see things done differently. It is not about the right answer, it is about a guided journey (John 16:13). Jesus did not say that he was sending us a new counselor that would tell us the truth, but that the new counselor, the Holy Spirit, would **lead** us into truth. In the New Testament we see the disciples being guided by the Holy Spirit, often not having a clue what they are doing.

We have looked briefly at Peter's process with the Holy Spirit, but Paul trying to figure out the next stop on his missionary journey would be another great example. If God just wanted Paul to get it right, why did he not just tell him to go into Macedonia in the first place? Why did God seem to play coy in providing Paul with a final destination? (Acts 6:6-10) Before we answer this question lets move on...

#4) Relationship with God vs. Procedure. In the Western worldview we want knowledge to get information, to get the right answers so that we can apply our knowledge correctly...have you ever looked up to heaven and said, "Just tell me what to do!" It is important that we apply our information the right way! "Tell me what I need to do, give me the three easy steps...lets make sure we do this right."

The Early Church/ Hebrew mindset was different. Seeking God produced a journey of encounter, of being led by the Holy Spirit, who, over time, as we change and come into line with his plans and worldview, reveals to us what we need to know (Prov 25:2). In this worldview, it is not about getting the right answer to do things. It is about being drawn into a relationship. It is about a journey of walking with the lover of our soul and:

We with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
2 Cor 3:18

It is about spending time with Jesus, lifting our needs to him, allowing our needs to push us into his presence, thus causing us to be transformed! Our need causes us to spend time with Jesus listening, looking, and walking beside him...thus producing transformation. Now what would happen to this transformation if God just gave us the answer we needed all of the time? "Thank you very much Lord, I'll see you later when I need something else!" No transformation, no time spent in relationship, just head knowledge so that our souls can feel better.

#5) Intimacy vs. the Law. If we follow the Modern worldview, seeking knowledge to gain information, to get the right answers, so that we do what we need to do right...guess what this produces...being under the law again! Ever wonder why God began the New Testament church with a vision of unclean animals in a net and then a guided process of walking with the Holy Spirit in relationship? Why didn't Jesus just appear to the Apostles and make it easy:

“OK boys, here is what we are going to do. The temple is passé. We’re not going to need that anymore. In fact, hand washing, Passover, sacrifices, let’s just get rid of them all...Oh yeah, and circumcision! Let’s get rid of that as well. I’m sure I won’t hear any argument on that... Last, but, not least, let’s let the Gentiles into this little party as well.”

Why didn’t Jesus do this? Why a symbolic vision followed by a whole series of events that led Peter into truth instead of just telling him the information he needed to know? Because if Jesus would have given a list from heaven it would have created a whole new set of rules to follow. We would once again be subservient to a list instead of a relationship. In fact, after hearing Peter explain the whole series of events again in Acts 15 the strongest language the council of Elders could come up with was,

“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following...”

Acts 15:28

“It seemed good.” Not very strong words for letting the rest of the world into your religion. But the Council in Jerusalem understood that it wasn’t about a new set of rules, it was about being in relationship with the Holy Spirit as he led: ‘it felt good to the Holy Spirit and to us.’ It wasn’t a list...it was about walking in a relationship.

And this is where we find the Hebrew/ Early Church worldview concluding; in relationship, in intimacy. Instead of law and following a set of rules the Hebrew/Early Church worldview brings us into closer intimacy with Jesus as we walk with him, realizing that, over time, we are changed into His image as He provides our needs.

Back to our original question; why is God silent sometimes, but will speak about other things? Because he wants to spend time with us, to be in an intimate relationship with us, to change us on the journey so we don’t just get information, we get Him.

So, the next time God isn’t speaking to you, change the topic. Make it about dialoging with the lover of your soul, not a need. He knows what you need and in His timing He will speak. Be His friend first.

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