

Can You Hear Me Now? Barriers To Hearing God's Voice

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When my son Steven was 13 years old, he was appalled at my lack of technological advancement in the area of communication. It was during the 1990s when it seemed everyone was getting a cell phone, except his mom. I didn't want a cell phone so I could be reached at anytime, anyplace, by anyone. My chariot (a silver blue station wagon) served as a quiet place of escape as I scurried from place to place. Why would I want to be interrupted by the constant ringing? I thought.

But Steven's insistence continued regardless of my indifference to modern technology. "Mom, why don't you have a cell phone?" he asked one day on the way to school. "Everybody else has one." "Everyone?" I asked. "Your dad doesn't have one." "OK, Dad doesn't, but tell me another mom, besides Grandma, who doesn't," he argued. Actually, his grandmother did have one, but I didn't think this was the time to share that information with him.

"Son," I explained, "I just don't need a cell phone. I like getting in my car and listening to the quiet and I don't want to be accessible 24 hours a day. Besides, 'everyone else has one' has never been much of a motivator for me."

Boy was I surprised the following Christmas when I opened my present from Steven to find a flip-top mobile phone, purchased with his own money. Steven had convinced my husband that Charlotte was no longer safe for a woman to be driving around town without a cell phone. Steven agreed to pay \$10 for the phone if Steve agreed to pay the monthly service fees. My husband bought it hook, line, and sinker from that 13-year-old stinker.

I opened that box, pulled out the phone and looked up at Steven grinning like a Cheshire cat who had eaten the pet canary. "Oh, thank you Steven," I said, "Now when Dad and I are out and you are home alone, I can call you anytime and from anyplace to see what you are doing. How thoughtful of you." From the look on his face, a canary bone had suddenly lodged in his throat. Obviously, this thought had not crossed his mind.

A few weeks later, I decided to try out my new toy. Steve and I were out for the evening, and on our way home I called Steven. "Steven, this is mom. Dad and I are in the car and I want to try out the phone. When I hang up, you call me and let's see how it works."

"OK," he said. We waited a few minutes, but the phone never rang. I called Steven back to see what the problem was. "Steven, this is Mom again. What happened?"

"I called your number," he explained, "but the operator said either your phone was turned off or you were out of range."

"That can't be right. The phone is definitely on and I'm only a few miles from home. Try again." Steven tried again, but with the same results.

The next day, I called the cell phone company to find out why I was having trouble. "Mrs. Jaynes, where were you when you tried to receive the call?" the service operator asked. "I was on Randolph Road near Central Church," I answered.

"Let me explain how this works," she continued. "A cellular phone works by sending out and receiving radio waves from a cell site tower. You were at a point on Randolph that dips down into a small valley and the radio waves couldn't reach down into the dip for you to receive the signals."

"Another possibility," she continued, "was that the large church blocked the signal. We have trouble with large buildings blocking radio transmissions all the time."

"And Mrs. Jaynes, was your battery pack powered up?"

"Yes, I had just charged it that morning."

"How about the antennae? Was the antennae up?" she asked.

"No, the antennae wasn't up, but I hadn't planned on walking around town with my antennae sticking out of my pocketbook."

"That might have been a problem as well."

"Let me get this straight," as I summed up the conversation. "In order for this new piece of technological wonder to work properly, I cannot be in a dip in the road or behind a tall building; I must have the battery fully charged and the antennae up. Is that correct?"

"That's pretty much it," she replied. "One more question," I continued. "Why is it that I could place a call, but I couldn't receive a call?"

"That's because it takes more cell strength to receive a call than to send a call," she replied.

I was more than frustrated with this piece of plastic and failed to see the draw of owning one. Then I settled down to spend my daily quiet time with the Lord. I was trying to calm my spirit, when God sent a call. Could the reasons you had difficulty receiving a transmission on your cell phone be the same reasons you have difficulty receiving a transmission from Me? Could those be the same reasons you have trouble hearing My voice?

That came through loud and clear and for the next several days I studied, prayed, listened and came to realize the similarities of poor reception on both accounts are remarkable.

If I am having trouble hearing from God I need to ask myself the following questions: Number one: Am I in an emotional dip in the road? (Remedy: Begin praising God and watch Him take you to level ground. Psalm 13)

Number two: Is there a wall of sin blocking my reception? (Remedy: Repent of any sin in your life, turn and go in the opposite direction, back to God. Isaiah 59:1-2.)

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Bringing God's Truth
To Today's Women

Number three: Is my spiritual battery depleted? (Remedy: Ephesians tells us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We are recharged when we spend time in God's Word and in prayer. Ephesians 5:18)

Number four: Have I retracted my antenna and refused to listen to God? (Remedy: Do not be afraid of God's voice and ask Him to speak to you. Exodus 20:19, Jeremiah 29:11)

Number five: Do I have enough "cell strength" or faith to receive His call? (Remedy: Believe that God will speak to you and be still enough to listen. Proverbs 8:34, Psalm 5:3-4) Jesus said that He was the Good Shepherd who speaks to His sheep -- that's us (John 10:14-16).

If we are having trouble hearing from God, we need to examine our lives for these five barriers and ask the technician to walk us through the steps for improving our reception.

God is asking -- "Can you hear me now?"