

Spiritual Tip

Sometimes God Speaks By Saying Nothing

By Rick Warren

Sometimes God speaks by saying nothing. This is extremely frustrating to us! But God has his reasons when he's silent. You have to just wait and trust him. If you run ahead of God saying, "I haven't heard anything from God, so I'm just going to go ahead and do this" and you don't trust him, you're going to have all kinds of problems and be filled with regret.

There are many examples of this in the Bible. One of them was King Saul, the first king of Israel. He was getting ready to go to battle, and he went to God and said, "God, what do you want me to do in this battle?"

But Saul hadn't been right with God for a long time. The Bible says in 1 Samuel 28:6, "Saul prayed to GOD, but GOD didn't answer — neither by dream nor by sign nor by prophet" (MSG).

Saul tried to find an answer three different ways, and he still didn't get it. So he got impatient. He got desperate, and he turned to the occult — something he had outlawed in the country. He said, "Go find a spiritual advisor. Find me a medium, a psychic, a witch, somebody who can conjure up spirits or do a séance." He knew it was wrong, and he did it anyway because he got desperate. And you know what happened? He lost everything. He lost the battle. He lost his reputation. He lost his life. He didn't wait to hear from God, and he suffered great consequences.

So what do you do when God is silent?

First, you remember that God is in control. Job 34:29 says, "If God is silent, what's that to you? If he turns his face away, what can you do about it? But whether silent or hidden, he's there, ruling." God may not share his plan with you, but it doesn't mean he doesn't have one. He has a plan and purpose for your life. He loves you. He's a good God. And he'll take care of you if you'll just wait on him.

Second, you trust God. The Bible says in Psalm 50:14, "I want you to trust me in your times of trouble, so I can rescue you and you can give me glory" (TLB). God is asking you today, "Will you trust me? Will you trust me with that financial problem? Will you trust me with that dream? Will you trust me with that ache in your heart? Will you trust me with that stress? Will you trust me with that loneliness? Will you trust me with that desire to get married? Will you trust me with that health issue? Will you trust me with your dreams and ambitions? Will you trust me?"

Pray this prayer aloud or in your heart:

"Dear God, I don't want to go through life without hearing from you. I want to learn to listen. Thank you for the Bible. Help me to read it. Thank you for gifted teachers. Help me to act on what they teach. Help me to make some godly friends that I can trust and listen to. I want to be open to the ideas that you place in my mind. When I'm in pain, help me to learn from it, not run from it. Most of all, help me to trust you and your plan when you're silent. Jesus Christ, I want to get to know you and love you like you love me. In your name I pray. Amen."

Parenting Tip

No. 94

Did Your Mother Love You?

By Gary Chapman

Life's greatest happiness is found in good relationships, and life's deepest pain is found in bad relationships. If you feel loved by your mother, then the maternal relationship brings you feelings of comfort and encouragement. On the other hand, if your relationship with your father is fractured, you probably suffer feelings of abandonment.

Many single adults have felt unloved by one or both parents. In my book: **The Five Love Languages: Singles Edition**, one of the ideas I discuss is how understanding the five love languages can help Singles establish or re-establish a more positive relationship with parents. Love holds the greatest potential for healing the past and creating a better future.

Sometime ago, I was speaking at a state penitentiary on the topic of the five love languages. I took the slant of helping them understand why they did or did not feel loved by their parents. When I called for questions or comments, one young man said, "I want to thank you for coming. For the first time in my life I realize that my mother loves me. My love language is physical touch, but my mother never hugged me. In fact, the first time I ever remember getting a hug from her was the day I left for prison. But, I realized she spoke some of the other love languages. She really was loving me. I just didn't get it."

You see, most parents honestly desire to communicate love to their children, but unless they are aware that love languages differ for different people, they tend to express love through their own love language. It wasn't that they didn't love you, but rather they didn't know how to express love in a way that made you feel loved. Through understanding the love languages, you may discover that your parents really did love you.

Whether you are single or married, you might consider taking the free [Love Language Assessment](#) for Singles to discover how you prefer to receive love from others, and in this case: a parent.

You might find the results bring healing to a hurt relationship from the past, as well as give you some insight for a better future.

Getting Started

The Love Languages Profile will give you a thorough analysis of your emotional communication preference. It will single out your primary love language, what it means, and how you can use it to connect with those closest to you and effectively enhance the relationships in your life.

You may score certain ones of the love languages more highly than others, but do not dismiss those other languages as insignificant. Your friends and loved ones may express love in those ways, and it will be beneficial for you to understand this about them.

In the same way, it will benefit your friends and loved ones to know your love language and express his affection for you in ways that you interpret as love. Every time you or they speak one another's language, you score emotional points with one another. Of course, this isn't a game with a scorecard! The payoff of speaking each other's love language is more of a feeling of "this person understands me and cares for me." This translates into better communication, increased understanding, and, ultimately, improved relationships.

Marriage Tip

The Surrendered Wife

By Laura Doyle

Why Would a Woman Surrender?

When I was newly married at 22, I had no idea I would ever call myself a surrendered wife. At that time, I would have been repulsed by the whole idea.

I did know that marriage was risky because I had watched my parents go through a brutal divorce. Still, I was hopeful that I could do better. I was amazed that my husband, John, could love me as much as he did, and part of me believed we could make our marriage work simply because there was so much goodness in it to start with.

At first I treated him with respect and kindness because I was so impressed with him. Then, as his imperfections grew more familiar and glaring, I began correcting him as a way of trying to help him improve. From my point of view, if he would just be more ambitious at work, more romantic at home and clean up after himself, everything would be fine. I told him as much.

Needless to say, he didn't respond well to this. In fact, the more I tried to control him, the more strained things got. While my intentions were good, I was clearly on the road to marital hell. The more he resisted, the more I tried to control him, and the more frustrated and irritable we both got. In no time I was exhausted from trying to run my life and his. Even worse, I was becoming estranged from the man who had formerly made me so happy. Our marriage was in serious trouble and it had only been four years since we'd taken our vows.

My loneliness was so acute I was willing to try anything to cure it. I went to therapy, where I learned that I often used control as a defense. I read John Gray's Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus, which gave me some understanding of our

differences. I talked to other women to find out what worked in their marriages.

One friend told me she let her husband handle all of the finances, and what a relief that was for her. Another one told me she tried never to criticize her husband, no matter how much he seemed to deserve it. I decided I would experiment with doing things differently in my marriage and hoped that it wasn't too late for us. I desperately wanted to save the relationship, and I also hoped to save my self-respect, which was fading with each episode of anger and frustration I unleashed on John.

Fortunately, the steps of surrendering helped me with both marital tranquility and self-respect. Today I call myself a surrendered wife because that's what's helped me have the marriage I've always dreamed of. The same thing will happen to you if you follow the principles in this book.

None of us feels good about ourselves when we're nagging, critical or controlling. I certainly didn't. The tone of my voice alone would make me cringe with self-recrimination. Through surrendering, you will find the courage to gradually stop indulging in these unpleasant behaviors and replace them with dignified ones.

You will also have more time and energy to focus on what's most important to you. Whether your desire is to have a more harmonious family, run a top corporation, or both, you'll feel increasing pride as you realize your goals faster than ever before. Surrendering has a way of bringing out the best in us, both as individuals and as wives, which is why it's so worth doing.

The Return of the Man Who Wooed Me

There was no single moment when the surrendered light bulb went off in my head. Instead, I changed little by little. I experimented, first by keeping my mouth shut, and sometimes even my eyes, when John drove. When we arrived in one piece, I decided that I would always trust him

behind the wheel, no matter how strong my urge to control.

Next, I stopped buying his clothes (yes, even his underwear), even though I worried that he wouldn't buy any for himself. (I was wrong.) I learned what not to do from making painful mistakes, like criticizing the way he maintained the cars, which made me feel like my mother when she was cranky and caused him to watch TV for four straight hours. I prayed for wisdom, and took more baby steps towards approaching the relationship without control.

Slowly but surely, things started to change.

As I stopped bossing him around, giving him advice, burying him in lists of chores to do, criticizing his ideas and taking over every situation as if he couldn't handle it, something magical happened. The union I dreamed of appeared.

The man who wooed me was back.

We were intimate again. Instead of keeping a running list of complaints about how childish and irresponsible he was, I felt genuine gratitude and affection for John. We were sharing our responsibilities without blame or resentment. Instead of bickering all the time, we were laughing together, holding hands, dancing in the kitchen and enjoying an electrifying closeness that we hadn't had for years.

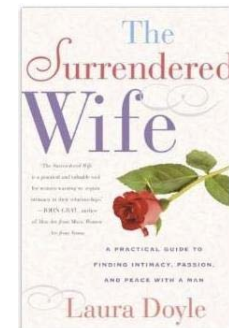
For our ninth wedding anniversary, I changed my last name to match my husband's. "Now that I know him a little better, I figure I'll give it a shot," I joked to my friends. What I really meant was that I wanted to be intimate with John in a way that I never was before. I wanted to do something that symbolized my tremendous respect for him, and to acknowledge outwardly an inward shift. This was the natural development of a path I had started some time ago without realizing it.

I certainly didn't change overnight. At first, I felt uneasy when I held my tongue instead

of expressing my opinion about everything. Restraining myself from correcting my husband felt like trying to write with my left hand. Life had become awkward!

Surrendering was a gradual process that steadily reinforced itself with positive results. Over time, I formed new habits. When I found myself slipping back into my old ways, I stopped to ask myself, "Which do I want more: To have control of every situation or to have an intimate marriage?"

Naturally, emotional connection, lack of tension, dignity, having kindness and being able to relax always trumped getting the chores done or having things my way all the time. To remind myself of my new priorities, I adopted the word "surrender" as my mantra, because it was shorter and more to the point than saying, "stop trying to control everything." I repeated "surrender" to myself silently over and over again.



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