

Conversations with God

**By
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May the words of my mouth and the meditations that are in all our hearts be acceptable to Thee dear Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer.

Have you ever talked to God? I don't mean saying a prayer but have you ever had a conversation with God? I am not saying that praying isn't important. When we pray to God it is usually because we have a request for help or health for ourselves or loved ones or it can be a way of thanking God for the good things in our lives or the good we see in the world around us. For whatever reason you pray it is important to you and to God.

But today I want to address having a two-way conversation with God. One where he talks to you and you respond. Let me share a few instances when God and I had a conversation.

It's early Monday morning in January and I groan as I wake up an hour earlier than my normal 5am rise and shine time. It has been snowing all night and there is a fresh 6 inches of snow that has to be cleared from the sidewalks and driveway so that Sandi and I can get to work. I put on warm clothes and head down stairs. Thanks to modern technology, the coffee pot was set up the night before and I pour myself a cup of coffee on my way to the basement. There I put on my boots, heavy jacket, gloves and hat and then grabbed the snow shovel. As soon as I stepped outside, I was struck by the cold dry air, the kind that makes your nasal hairs bristle. I stop and notice the beauty of the fresh snow blanketing the back yard, undisturbed by man or animal. It is still snowing slightly and I look up, open my mouth and catch a snowflake on my tongue. It's cold but refreshing. A gust of wind whips up a snow devil and I watch it dissipate into the woods. Then it happens, God says, "good morning". The conversation begins.

It's the third Saturday in April. Yeah, spring is just starting and it's the opening day of trout season in Connecticut. I arrived at my favorite stream about 5:30 and shared coffee and conversation with several other opening day fishermen before the 6 AM start time. One of them passes out plastic bags and asks us to pick up some trash before we call it a day. It's now mid-morning and I have two fresh trout for dinner as I wade down stream to another spot. When I get there, I find a young man with his daughter fishing this little hot spot. At first, I am a little disappointed but that soon turns to sheer enjoyment as I watch her catch her first fish. She is jumping, laughing, and screaming as her father lifts a nice 10-inch rainbow from the stream. "Can we keep him?" she keeps asking over and over. Then she yells at her dad to hurry up because she wants to catch more. I quietly smile as I continue further down stream so they can enjoy this special moment between father and daughter. I put on a worm and on my first cast hook a trout. I land a beautiful

8-inch brown trout and I admire the vibrant orange, yellow and brown spots on its side as I gently remove the hook and place him back in the stream. Ready to call it quits I climb out of the stream and before heading home I sit on a rock and smell the earth warming up after a long winter, listen to gurgling water in the stream and feel the warmth of the spring sun on my face. Then it happens, God speaks and we talk.

It's a warm summer afternoon in June and I am standing in the middle of the American Cemetery in Coleville on the Normandy coast of France. I am totally in awe at the scene in front of me. Thousands of crosses and stars marking the graves of American men and women who gave it all stopping the spread of evil throughout Europe in the Second World War. They stand in amazingly straight rows, all facing west, towards the home to which they will never return. I am crying as I say a short prayer of thanks by one of the markers. I rise from my knees and find my way to a bench along the walkway by the cliff to compose myself and admire the contrast of the pure white marble markers with the lush green vegetation and the azure blue sky over head. The day is unbelievably peaceful with a warm breeze and the waves of the English Channel gently lapping the beaches below. Try as I might, I cannot envision the chaos of that day, June 6, 1944. I look back down towards the beach and see a solitary WWII veteran kneeling in prayer on the red sand beach. And then it happens, God speaks and we talk.

It's evening, the Sunday after Thanksgiving. I am in the mountains of Pennsylvania, a place where I have spent many weeks after Thanksgiving hunting with my Dad, Uncle Bob, and Cousin Ernie. We sold the old hunting camp, Wee Five, several years ago, and now Ernie has a place of his own on top of Armenia Mountain and he has invited me to hunt with him once again. This time is very special to me not only because of the hunting tradition that I grew up with, but because Ernie has been battling a very rare form of bone cancer for almost two years and one never knows. Since I arrived Friday afternoon, we have enjoyed quiet walks through the woods, did some repair work on the cabin, sat in front of the wood stove laughed at jokes and told stories about past hunts and Huckleberry Mountain, and shared some pretty good meals. It's Sunday evening now and Ernie heads off to bed early. Tomorrow is the first day of deer hunting season and it starts with breakfast at 4 AM. Before I retire, I step outside of the cabin and walk around the pond. The cold mountain air has frozen the evening dew making the grass crunch beneath my feet. I can see my breath in the clean mountain air. In the field below the pond, I can make out 4 deer in the dim moonlight. I look up and admire the millions of twinkling stars that fill heavens. Then it happens, God speaks and we talk.

These are four of my most memorable conversations with God. God speaks in various ways to us every day but and we usually listen but don't always respond. So, I encourage you to listen and respond. It can happen at any time and usually when you least expect it. You will hear Him speak and when he does talk with him. And just as important as recognizing those times He is speaking, is to listen to what He is saying.

God and I have talk about many things during those special conversations; love, hatred, war, peace, helping others and even the weather. But he always has one very special message that he wants to share with the world. This message is best conveyed in the last verse of George Strait's "Love Without End"

Last night I dreamed I died and stood outside those pearly gates
When suddenly I realized there must be some mistake
If they know half the things I've done
They'll never let me in
Then somewhere from the other side
I hear these words again
He said, let me tell you a secret
About a Father's love
A secret that my Daddy said
Was just between us
You see Daddy's don't just love their children
Every now and then
It's a love without end.

Amen.