



G R A C E

FOCUS

F A L L 2 0 0 6

I had just finished Gary Chapman's book, *The Five Love Languages of Teenagers*. And took plenty of notes. So, while my son, Josh, ate his breakfast, I enlightened him with love language lingo. (Every twelve-year-olds dream conversation, of course!)

It was during my rambling, however, that Josh stopped mid-slurp of Captain Crunch to ask me a poignant question:

"Mom," "Yeah, honey?" my ears tuned with expectancy. "Which land animal is the loudest—a howler monkey, a hyena, or an AFRICAN ELEPHANT?"

His eyes staring at the back of his cereal box. Slurp filled silence.

"What about what I just said?" I asked, trying to get him back to my world. "Oh, mom." "Well—

my guess would be the hyena," I quipped with a loud hyena like laugh. "I bet it's the African elephant." Josh blurted while bounding up the stairs to get dressed for school.

I am wondering how a mom's supposed to communicate with her son, when his mind is...well, his mind is in Africa.

More importantly, I am questioning how God catches my attention, considering most days my thoughts may not only be in another Continent, they might be meandering the aisles in search of school supplies, pondering the concerns of the Middle East, settling a dispute between my three children, or

reviewing a to-do list while I drive—did I just pass my road?

Yes, I can hear God trying to talk to me through my static filled day, "Can you hear me now—can you hear me now?" And what does he get from me...slurp filled silence.

In the last few months I have become more and more aware of my longing to hear God. And in late I have learned a great deal about hearing God's voice by reading about a man named Elijah.

Now Elijah, the Tishbite, was a prophet. Not only did

he predict famine in Israel (1 Kings 17:11), defeat the prophets of Baal at Carmel, (1 Kings 18: 16-46), and run faster than rain (1 Kings 18:46), but Elijah was a man that could identify a familiar voice—God's voice.

After Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal, he ran for his life from the threat of Jezebel for forty days and nights. (A difficult task even

for a man that could out run rain.) Finally, he reached Horeb, the mountain of God, and went into a cave to spend the night. (1 Kings 19: 3-9.)

It was in the cave that the word of the Lord came to Elijah questioning, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Elijah replied that he had been "very zealous for the Lord God Almighty," (1 Kings 19:10). And explained that not only had the Israelites rejected God's covenant, and broken down alters, but they were killing off all the prophets. Elijah figured he was next.

Then Elijah was told to "go out and stand on the mountain because the Lord is about to pass by." It was about this time that a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks, but Elijah knew the Lord was not in the wind. How did he know that? After the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake either. After the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. Then it says that, "When Elijah heard

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CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

by
BETH
DUEWEL



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it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave," (1 Kings 19: 11-13). Elijah knew God's voice.

Elijah knew God's voice just as our children know our voice (even if they might be distracted by a cereal box. Sigh). So, maybe one can reason that Elijah heard God because he had fewer distractions than we might encounter in this current day and age. (I mean, they didn't even have Captain Crunch back then). Well, Elijah was literally running for his life (one might be a little preoccupied with that fact), then there was the wind, the earthquake, and the fire—not your everyday natural occurrence for most of us. Yet, Elijah heard the whisper. So, if I want to be able to focus and hear what God is whispering, it helps to know him on an intimate level. I can do that by reading His Word.

Further into Elijah's story, again the Lord asks, **"What are you doing here, Elijah?"** Elijah's answer is similar to the first. Then the Lord tells him to, **"...go back the way you came, and go to the desert of Damascus,"** (1 Kings 19:15). What? I can't help but feel a little pity for the poor fellow at this point. After all, running for your life can't be easy, and now he needs to go back. Ouch.

Since, I can be certain God wasn't questioning Elijah because he didn't know the answer, maybe he was asking because He wanted Elijah to ask himself the same question, Hmmm, what am I doing here? Had God told me to come? It seems that in the rush to spare his life, Elijah forgot to ask God where he was supposed to go. Do you blame him? And what would be my excuse? "Sorry God, I forgot to ask because I was too busy running to pick up glue sticks for my kids." I guess when I desire to hear a reply from God—I need to learn to ask through prayer first. It can save me some grief and backtracking.

And just as my ears were tuned with expectancy to Josh's question, Elijah's ears were tuned with expectancy from God. How else would he have heard a whisper in all that commotion? So, knowing God, asking God (first), and tuning in with an ear of expectancy can help me to hear His voice—even over my oven timer that is telling me supper's done.

Oh, I almost forgot. The answer to that ever important question: which land animal is the loudest?...it's the howler monkey. I'm certain you will sleep better tonight knowing that fact! I know Josh and I sure will. Smile.