

# Praying at the Stop Sign: Spiritual Preparation for Major Life Change

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WEEK THREE – Listening to God in Unexpected Ways<sup>1</sup>

April 7

*“Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.  
Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.”*

Ephesians 5:16-17

*“Always be joyful. Never stop praying”*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-17

*“Don’t ever be ashamed of loving the strange things  
that makes your weird little heart happy.”*

Elizabeth Gilbert

## **The Absolute Imperative of the Sovereignty of God**

- God is present in everything (omnipresence) = God’s power and God’s knowledge extend to all parts of his creation
- God can (and does) work through anything
- God has design and purpose for each one of us (indefinite article omitted)
- God will go with you wherever you go – so just do something already

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<sup>1</sup> See reference suggestions for more “expected” and very important ways to listen to God

## Demystifying “Listening” (to God)

- Some secular tools that might get you started
  - Pro/Con List
  - Situation-Specific Strategic Assessment
    - What thrills you?
    - What chills you?
    - Where would you have the most opportunity to grow?
    - Where are the dead ends for you?
- Finding and Maintaining a Balance Between:
  - Questions and answers
  - Talking and listening
    - To God
    - To other people
  - Internal fulfillment and external fruitfulness

## Glorifying and Enjoying – note the order

- We are created to (1) glorify God and (2) enjoy him forever
  - Enjoyment is *always* the derivative
- The *critical distinction* between joy and “happiness”
  - Where are you “at home?”

- Listening for the voice of God through others – some may even acknowledge faith(!)
  - Who has made the transition you are about to make and how did they do it?
  - What do the people you trust most see in you and show you about yourself?
  - How/Where can you be the most beneficial to other people?

### **Unhelpful / Irrelevant Questions – And I’ll Tell You Why**

- “What do I want?”
- What do other people expect/demand of me?
- What will other people think?

*“When the God pushes you to the edge, trust him fully.  
One of two things will happen.  
He will either catch you when you fall, or he will teach you to fly.”*  
Mark Allan Williams

Some ideas for further reading:

Simon Van Bruchem, *Distinctively Christian Retirement: A Biblical Call to Serve Jesus Well in Older Age*,  
© 2022, Written for our Instruction Press

Steven Machia, *The Discerning Life: An Invitation to Notice God in Everything*  
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*Crafting a Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well-Ordered Way*  
© 2012, IVP

*Silencio: Reflective Practices for Nurturing Your Soul*  
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