

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

A Companion Devotional to

Do You Hear What I Hear? — Waking to the Sound of God

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with gratitude for the life and contribution of Mario Griseta

The Presence Network

www.ThePresenceNetwork.org

An Invitation Before We Begin

This is not a book about trying harder to hear God.

It is not thirty days of techniques for getting God to speak.

And it is certainly not an attempt to add another voice to the religious noise already surrounding us.

It begins with a much simpler possibility:

What if God has been “sounding” all along?

What if the invitation is not to make God speak, but to become quiet enough to recognize the Sound?

For the next thirty days, we invite you to do something remarkably simple.

Find somewhere quiet.

It doesn't need to be sacred by anyone else's definition.

Sit beneath a tree.

Walk beside water.

Watch the sunrise.

Sit on your porch.

Stay in your favorite chair.

Walk through a field.

Sit in your car before going into work.

The location matters far less than your willingness to become present.

Don't demand an experience.

Don't try to manufacture a voice.

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30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Don't worry if you hear nothing at all.

Simply become available.

Because perhaps stillness is not where God finally arrives.

Perhaps stillness is where we begin noticing that Presence was already here.

Each day contains five movements:

THE SOUND — a passage of Scripture.

LISTEN — a short reflection.

BECOME STILL — a simple practice of presence.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR? — a question to carry with you.

WALK FROM THE SOUND — because what we hear eventually becomes how we live.

Take your time.

There is nowhere to get to.

There is nothing to prove.

Just listen.

Perhaps you will recognize something familiar.

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DAY 1 - Before the Noise

THE SOUND

“And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” —Genesis 1:3

LISTEN

Before there was religion, there was Sound.

Before denominations.

Before doctrines.

Before theological systems.

Before churches, pulpits, books, creeds, arguments, or explanations.

God spoke. “And God said...”

And something that had not been visible became visible.

Light.

Genesis begins with a God who sounds.

And creation responds.

Perhaps this is where our journey should begin—not with the question, *How can I get God to speak to me?*

But with another question:

What if I already exist inside something God has spoken?

You woke this morning inside creation.

Before you said anything, birds may have already been calling.

Wind may have been moving.

Water somewhere was flowing.

Your heart was beating.

Your lungs were breathing.

Life was happening before you became conscious of it.

Perhaps Presence is like that.

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We awaken inside something already happening.

The first spiritual practice, then, may not be speaking.

It may be **noticing**.

BECOME STILL

Sit quietly for three minutes.

Don't pray with words yet.

Simply notice the sounds around you.

Near sounds.

Distant sounds.

Pleasant sounds.

Annoying sounds.

Your own breathing.

Don't label any of them "spiritual."

Just listen.

Then quietly say:

"I am listening."

And become silent again.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

What noise within me makes it difficult to become still?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Today, before responding quickly to someone, pause long enough to actually hear them.

Perhaps listening to God begins by becoming a better listener to everything else.

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DAY 2 - The Sound in the Garden

THE SOUND

“They heard the sound of the LORD God... in the garden...” —Genesis 3:8

LISTEN

The Hebrew word is *qol*.

Sound. Voice. Something heard.

Adam hears the *qol* of God moving through the garden.

We often imagine footsteps.

Crunch. Crunch. Crunch.

But Genesis gives us something more mysterious.

Presence has become perceptible.

Adam hears.

And apparently he knows whose Sound it is.

That matters.

Recognition implies familiarity.

There are voices you can recognize without seeing the person speaking. Someone you love can call your name from another room and you immediately know:

That’s them.

You don’t analyze frequencies.

You don’t demand evidence.

Relationship has taught you the Sound.

Perhaps this is what we are recovering.

Not supernatural hearing.

Not chasing voices.

Not treating every thought as a message from heaven.

Something much more grounded:

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Becoming familiar with the character of God.

What does Love sound like?

What does mercy sound like?

What does truth without condemnation sound like?

What does Presence sound like?

Maybe we learn the Voice in much the same way we learn any beloved voice.

By spending time together.

BECOME STILL

Close your eyes.

Breathe naturally.

Don't try to hear words.

Simply imagine yourself available to Love.

If thoughts come, let them come and go.

For three minutes, remain.

Then whisper:

“Teach me to recognize the Sound.”

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

When I imagine God approaching me, what do I instinctively expect to hear?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Pay attention today to the tone of your own voice.

Ask yourself:

Does my sound make it easier or harder for another person to experience love?

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DAY 3 - When the Sound Becomes Frightening

THE SOUND

“I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid... so I hid.” —Genesis 3:10

LISTEN

This may be one of the saddest sentences in Scripture.

I heard You.

I was afraid.

I hid.

Notice what Adam does not say.

He doesn't say:

“You threatened me.”

He says:

“I heard You...and I was afraid.”

Something happened within the hearer.

The Sound of Presence passed through fear and became interpreted as danger.

Perhaps we know something about this.

A slammed door is only a sound.

Footsteps are only a sound.

A raised voice is only a sound.

Until experience gives that sound meaning.

Then years later, the body may respond to an echo as though the original event were happening again.

Could something similar happen spiritually?

If authority sounded angry, perhaps God sounds angry.

If love was conditional, perhaps God sounds conditional.

If religion constantly measured us, perhaps God sounds disappointed.

If someone important abandoned us, perhaps even divine silence sounds like leaving.

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And we may spend years running from something **we have mistaken for God**.

Maybe one part of healing is asking:

Is this actually His Voice?

Jesus gives us a way to test the Sound.

What does God sound like?

Listen to Jesus.

BECOME STILL

Bring to mind one sentence you have carried about God:

God is disappointed in me.

I am never enough.

God is waiting for me to fail.

I have to earn His nearness.

Whatever yours may be, don't fight it.

Simply notice it.

Then ask:

“Where did I learn that sound?”

Remain quiet.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

Have I confused an old echo with the Voice of God?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

When you feel judgment toward yourself or another person today, pause.

Don't immediately obey the judgment.

Ask:

Is this the Sound of Love—or an old echo?

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DAY 4 - The Sound Beneath the Noise

THE SOUND

“Be still, and know that I am God.” —Psalm 46:10

LISTEN

Silence can be uncomfortable.

Not because nothing is there.

But because when external noise disappears, we begin hearing **internal noise**.

Arguments.

Regrets.

Plans.

Fear.

The conversation from yesterday.

The conversation we are rehearsing for tomorrow.

Religious voices.

Family voices.

Our own voice.

Stillness reveals just how crowded the room has become.

Perhaps that is why we sometimes avoid it.

But stillness is not the absence of thought.

And it isn't achieving some perfect mystical state.

Stillness can simply mean:

I don't have to follow every sound that passes through me.

Elijah discovered that God was not contained in the spectacular manifestations surrounding him.

Wind.

Earthquake.

Fire.

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And then came the mysterious *qol demamah daqqah*—that thin, gentle stillness.

Sometimes the loudest voice isn't the truest voice.

Religion can be loud.

Fear can be loud.

Certainty can be loud.

Shame can be very loud.

Love often doesn't need to shout.

BECOME STILL

Five minutes today.

Let everything make its noise.

Don't fight your thoughts.

Let them pass like traffic.

You don't have to chase every car.

Remain beside the road.

Breathe.

Listen beneath the traffic.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

What has been loudest in me lately?

And is loudness the same thing as truth?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Lower the volume somewhere today.

Turn something off.

Leave a silence unfilled.

Give another person room to finish speaking.

Discover what appears when you stop filling every space.

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DAY 5 - Before You Learned to Be Afraid

THE SOUND

“The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.” —Genesis 2:25

LISTEN

Before hiding, there was Presence.

Before covering, openness.

Before fear, relationship.

Before humanity began asking:

Am I acceptable?

Am I enough?

What does God think of me?

Am I in or out?

Genesis gives us this extraordinary description:

Naked and unashamed.

Not perfect performance.

Not religious achievement.

Simply human beings existing before God without the defensive machinery we have become so accustomed to carrying.

Then their eyes are opened.

They cover.

They hide.

And eventually Adam says:

“I heard Your Sound...and I was afraid.”

What if the Sound did not change?

What if the hearer did?

That possibility sits near the center of this entire book.

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Perhaps redemption includes healing our hearing until the approach of God no longer automatically sounds like condemnation.

Perhaps underneath everything fear taught us to hear, there remains an older Sound.

A Sound before shame.

A Sound before performance.

A Sound before religion told us whom God loved and whom God didn't.

A Sound that says:

Come closer.

BECOME STILL

Put both feet on the floor.

Let your hands rest open.

No clenched fists.

No religious performance.

Nothing to accomplish.

For several minutes, simply receive your own existence.

Then quietly say:

"I am here."

And perhaps, without forcing anything, allow yourself to imagine Presence answering:

"So am I."

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

Who might I become if I stopped believing that I had to hide from God?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Give one person today the gift of being **unashamed in your presence**.

Don't correct.

Don't fix.

Don't compare.

Don't make their vulnerability about you.

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Just give them room to be human.

That may be one of the holiest sounds another person ever hears.

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DAY 6 - My Sheep Know My Voice

THE SOUND

“My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” —John 10:27

LISTEN

There is something wonderfully uncomplicated about the way Jesus describes relationship with him.

He doesn't say:

“My sheep have mastered all the correct doctrines.”

He doesn't say:

“My sheep never doubt.”

He doesn't even say:

“My sheep understand everything I tell them.”

He says:

“My sheep hear my voice.”

And then something even more beautiful:

“I know them.”

Before following comes hearing.

And between hearing and following is relationship:

I know them.

This is not the language of strangers.

It is the language of familiarity.

A child can recognize a parent's voice in a crowded room. Not because the child has studied acoustics, but because relationship has created recognition.

Perhaps the spiritual journey is similar.

We learn the Voice by becoming familiar with the **character of the One speaking.**

Does the voice sound like Jesus?

Does it move toward frightened people?

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Does it restore dignity?

Does it tell the truth without humiliation?

Does it protect the vulnerable?

Does it forgive enemies?

Does it welcome children?

Does it sit beside grieving people?

Does it wash feet?

Does it love without manipulation?

Jesus gives us something against which every voice claiming to represent God can be heard.

The question is not merely:

“Is someone quoting Scripture?”

The question is also:

“Does this sound like Jesus?”

Because Scripture itself tells us that Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

Perhaps we recognize the Father’s Sound most clearly by listening to the Son.

BECOME STILL

Sit quietly for several minutes.

Picture no image.

Seek no supernatural experience.

Simply hold this sentence:

“I know them.”

Not:

They know enough.

Not:

They performed correctly.

Not:

They finally became acceptable.

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I know them.

Allow yourself to be known without explaining yourself.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

When I listen to the voices that have shaped my understanding of God, **which ones actually sound like Jesus?**

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Let someone experience today what it feels like to be **known without being managed.**

Listen before advising.

See before correcting.

Be present before fixing.

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DAY 7 - The Voices We Mistake for God

THE SOUND

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life...”
—John 10:10

LISTEN

There are many sounds inside us.

Fear has a sound.

Shame has a sound.

Ambition has a sound.

Religion has a sound.

Grief has a sound.

Trauma has a sound.

Our parents’ voices may remain within us.

Teachers.

Pastors.

People who wounded us.

People whose approval we desperately wanted.

And eventually those voices can become so familiar that we stop asking where they came from.

We simply assume:

This must be God.

But familiarity does not make a voice divine.

Some people have spent much of their lives believing God sounds like:

You’re disappointing Me.

Try harder.

You should be ashamed.

Everyone else is doing better.

Don’t question.

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Don't fail.

Don't let anyone see who you really are.

Yet when Jesus describes his purpose, he says:

“I have come that they may have life.”

That does not mean the Voice of God never confronts us.

Love can confront.

Truth can disturb.

Grace can lead us into difficult change.

But there is a difference between **conviction that calls us toward life** and condemnation that convinces us to hide.

One sounds:

Come.

The other sounds:

Stay away until you're better.

Learn the difference.

BECOME STILL

Write down one sentence you frequently say to yourself when you fail.

Read it slowly.

Then ask:

“Who taught me to speak to myself this way?”

Don't rush to answer.

Listen.

Then ask:

“Does this sound like Jesus?”

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

Which voice have I carried for years that I may have mistakenly named “God”?

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Notice your inner language today when you make a mistake.

Instead of immediately condemning yourself, try:

“What would Love invite me toward from here?”

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DAY 8 - When Shame Becomes the Interpreter

THE SOUND

“I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” —Genesis 3:10

LISTEN

Adam hears God.

Then shame interprets what he hears.

And the result is hiding.

This pattern continues in human beings.

Something happens.

Then something within us **interprets what happened.**

A person doesn't return our call.

They don't care about me.

Someone looks distracted.

I've done something wrong.

We fail.

God must be disappointed.

We experience silence.

God has left.

The interpretation can become more powerful than the event itself.

Shame is an especially unreliable interpreter.

Shame rarely says:

“You did something that needs healing.”

Shame says:

“There is something fundamentally wrong with you.”

And once shame becomes our interpreter, even Love can sound threatening.

Imagine Adam hiding among the trees.

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God asks:

“Where are you?”

We have sometimes heard that as the interrogation of an angry deity.

But what if it can also be heard as the question of Presence seeking a hiding human being?

Where are you?

Not because God lacks geographical information.

But because Adam has disappeared from relationship.

Maybe the first question God asks fallen humanity is not:

“What have you done?”

It is:

“Where are you?”

Presence seeks the hiding place.

BECOME STILL

Ask yourself gently:

Where am I hiding?

Perhaps from God.

Perhaps from someone else.

Perhaps even from yourself.

Don't immediately try to come out.

Simply become aware of the hiding place.

Then hear the question without accusation:

“Where are you?”

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

What changes if I hear God's “Where are you?” as invitation rather than accusation?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Notice someone today who seems withdrawn, quiet, or overlooked.

You don't need to interrogate them.

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Simply communicate:

I see you.

Sometimes Presence begins there.

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DAY 9 - Does God Sound Like Jesus?

THE SOUND

“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” —John 14:9

LISTEN

Eventually we need a reference point.

Otherwise “hearing God” can become whatever we happen to feel, fear, desire, or imagine.

For us, that reference point is Jesus.

Want to know what God sounds like?

Listen.

Listen to Jesus around the woman caught in adultery.

Listen to him with Zacchaeus.

Listen to him touching the untouchable.

Listen to him with children.

Listen to him at Lazarus’s grave.

Listen to him washing feet.

Listen to him with Peter after Peter denied him.

Listen to him from the cross:

“Father, forgive them.”

Jesus doesn’t simply give us more information about God.

He gives God a human face.

A human touch.

A human voice.

Perhaps Jesus is **the clarification of the Sound**.

This matters because religious voices can become very confident.

They can tell us precisely whom God hates.

Whom God rejects.

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Whom God has abandoned.

Whom God will not forgive.

And sometimes they can provide verses while doing it.

But followers of Jesus have another question available to us:

Does our interpretation sound like the One who revealed the Father?

Not:

Does it make me comfortable?

Not:

Does it never challenge me?

But:

Does it bear the character of Christ?

Truth and love are not enemies in Jesus.

Neither are holiness and mercy.

Jesus does not need to diminish one human being in order to restore another.

Listen carefully.

BECOME STILL

Choose one Gospel scene involving Jesus.

Don't analyze it.

Imagine yourself nearby.

Listen to his tone.

Watch whom he notices.

Notice whom he moves toward.

Then ask:

“What does this reveal to me about the Father?”

Remain there for several minutes.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

Is there something I have believed about God that becomes difficult to reconcile with Jesus?

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Don't be afraid of the question.

Let it remain open.

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Before making a judgment about someone today, ask:

“How might Jesus see this person?”

Then let your response sound accordingly.

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DAY 10 - Mary — When One Word Is Enough

THE SOUND

“Jesus said to her, ‘Mary.’” —John 20:16

LISTEN

Mary is standing in a garden.

She is grieving.

She sees Jesus.

But she doesn’t recognize him.

She thinks he is the gardener.

Then Jesus speaks one word:

“Mary.”

And everything changes.

She had sight.

But sight wasn’t enough.

Then she heard her name.

And recognition came.

There is something profoundly beautiful here.

Humanity once stood in a garden, heard God approaching, and hid.

Now another human being stands in another garden.

She hears the risen Christ.

And instead of hiding—

she turns toward him.

The first garden:

The Sound comes.

Humanity hides.

The resurrection garden:

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The Voice comes.
Humanity turns.

And notice what Jesus says.

He doesn't begin with theology.

He doesn't explain resurrection.

He doesn't give Mary a doctrinal examination.

He speaks **her name**.

Perhaps one of the deepest experiences of Presence is not merely discovering who God is.

It is discovering:

God knows who I am.

Not the version we perform.

Not the résumé.

Not the failure.

Not the diagnosis someone placed upon us.

Not the religious category.

Our name.

Our story.

Us.

BECOME STILL

Sit quietly.

Allow your own name to come to mind.

Not your titles.

Not what people need from you.

Not your responsibilities.

Not husband.

Wife.

Parent.

Pastor.

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Caregiver.

Professional.

Just your name.

Sit with the possibility of being completely known and still welcomed.

Don't manufacture words from God.

Simply allow yourself to be present.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

Who am I when I am not performing a role for someone else?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Speak someone's name with kindness today.

Look at them.

Be present.

Let your tone communicate:

You matter enough to be noticed.

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30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 11 - Trauma Echoes

THE SOUND

“I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid...” —Genesis 3:10

LISTEN

Some sounds continue long after the sound itself has stopped.

Footsteps coming down a hallway.

A door slamming.

Raised voices in another room.

A certain tone.

The sound of someone leaving.

Or perhaps the most painful sound of all:

silence when someone should have come.

The moment passes.

The room changes.

Years go by.

But sometimes the body remembers.

A sound in the present awakens an experience from the past, and suddenly we are responding not merely to what is happening now, but to **what that sound once meant.**

Perhaps we could call these **trauma echoes.**

This does not mean every fear is trauma or every uncomfortable experience needs a clinical label. It simply acknowledges something deeply human:

We learn meanings from what happens to us.

And sometimes those meanings follow us.

That makes Adam’s words fascinating:

“I heard You...and I was afraid.”

The text does not tell us that God’s *qol*—His Sound—was itself frightening.

Adam heard Presence through fear.

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Perhaps something similar can happen within us.

We hear the word **Father**, but our history interprets it.

We hear **authority**, but memory interprets it.

We hear Scripture, but religion interprets it.

We experience silence, but abandonment interprets it.

We make a mistake, but shame interprets it.

And eventually we may begin believing:

This is what God sounds like.

But what if it isn't?

What if some people aren't running from God at all?

What if they are running from an echo they have mistaken for God?

That question deserves compassion rather than judgment.

Perhaps healing does not require erasing every old echo.

Perhaps healing means encountering another Sound repeatedly enough that the old echo no longer gets the final word.

The echo says:

Hide.

Presence asks:

Where are you?

The echo says:

You're unwanted.

Presence calls your name.

The echo says:

Run.

Presence says:

Come.

The echo says:

You are alone.

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30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Presence says:

I am with you.

BECOME STILL

Don't search your past today.

Simply notice your body.

Feet on the floor.

Hands relaxed.

Breathe naturally.

Notice whether stillness feels peaceful or uncomfortable.

Whatever you notice, don't judge it.

Quietly say:

"I am here, now."

Then:

"I do not have to answer every old echo."

Remain still.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

Is there an old sound that still influences how I imagine God approaching me?

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Be especially attentive to your tone today.

Someone else's nervous system may remember the sound you leave behind.

Carry a sound that does not create another wound.

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30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 12 - When “Father” Doesn’t Sound Safe

THE SOUND

“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” —John 14:9

LISTEN

Jesus calls God **Father**.

For some people, that word feels like home.

For others, it doesn’t.

“Father” may evoke protection.

Or absence.

Tenderness.

Or unpredictability.

Encouragement.

Or criticism.

Safety.

Or fear.

We should never assume that everyone hears the same thing when they hear the word.

Our earliest relationships often give vocabulary to things we will later try to understand spiritually.

And sometimes we unknowingly reverse the process.

Instead of allowing Jesus to show us what the Father is like, we take what our human father was like and project it onto God.

If Dad was angry:

God must be angry.

If Dad was difficult to please:

God must be difficult to please.

If Dad disappeared:

God may disappear.

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30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

If Dad's affection had to be earned:

God's affection must be earned.

But Jesus offers another direction.

He doesn't say:

"Look at your earthly father and extrapolate upward."

He says, in effect:

"Look at Me."

Want to know what the Father is like?

Watch Jesus.

Watch whom He touches.

Watch whom He welcomes.

Watch Him weep.

Watch Him forgive.

Watch Him confront those who use religion to burden others.

Watch Him restore Peter.

Watch Him kneel and wash feet.

Listen from the cross.

Perhaps Jesus is not merely telling us that God is Father.

He is healing what the word Father means.

And this is where our own father, Vito, taught us something important without ever needing to be perfect.

Our father was human.

Beautifully, unmistakably human.

He succeeded.

He failed.

He loved.

He frustrated.

He carried gifts and weaknesses.

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30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

And perhaps one of the gifts of his transparency was that he did not need to become God for his sons.

He could simply be Dad.

And beyond Dad, we could continue listening for the Father Jesus reveals.

BECOME STILL

Notice what happens inside you when you hear:

Father.

Don't correct your reaction.

Don't make it spiritual.

Simply notice.

Then quietly bring Jesus into the question:

“Jesus, show me what You mean when You say Father.”

Don't force an answer.

Listen.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

How much of what I believe about God came from Jesus—and how much came from my experiences with human authority?

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If you carry authority in someone's life—as a parent, grandparent, spouse, supervisor, caregiver, teacher, pastor, or friend—remember:

Your sound may influence what authority sounds like to them.

Carry it gently.

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DAY 13 - The God We Learned to Fear

THE SOUND

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear...” —1 John 4:18

LISTEN

Some of us were not primarily taught to love God.

We were taught to be afraid of getting God wrong.

The language may have been sincere.

The people teaching us may have genuinely loved us.

But somewhere along the way, faith became filled with anxiety.

Did I pray correctly?

Did I believe enough?

Did I confess everything?

Am I saved?

Could I lose salvation?

Is this thought sinful?

Did God send this difficulty because I failed?

What if I misunderstood Scripture?

What if I chose the wrong church?

What if their doctrine is right and mine is wrong?

What if?

What if?

What if?

Eventually religion can create a strange contradiction:

We proclaim that **God is Love** while living terrified of Him.

This is where we should become curious.

Not rebellious.

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30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Not dismissive.

Curious.

Where did I learn that God sounded like this?

The religious world can become noisy.

Doctrines.

Dogmas.

Denominations.

Labels.

Arguments.

Insiders.

Outsiders.

Correct people.

Incorrect people.

Saved people.

Lost people.

People measuring other people while everyone insists they are defending God.

But then Jesus walks through all that noise.

And somehow children want to sit near Him.

Broken people approach Him.

Outcasts eat with Him.

A disgraced woman remains in His presence.

Peter fails catastrophically—and Jesus makes breakfast.

Perhaps we should allow that to disturb some of our assumptions.

If our theology of God makes Jesus seem kinder than His Father, perhaps something needs reconsideration.

Jesus did not come to rescue us **from** the Father.

Jesus came revealing the Father.

BECOME STILL

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Today, don't ask:

“What am I supposed to believe?”

For a few minutes ask:

“What am I afraid to believe about God's goodness?”

Maybe it is:

That I am actually loved.

That God isn't disappointed in me.

That grace is larger than I thought.

That I don't have to be afraid.

Let the question remain open.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

Has fear ever disguised itself as faithfulness in my spiritual life?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Notice whether your faith makes another person feel invited toward God or frightened away from Him.

You don't need to dilute truth.

Simply remember:

Truth sounds different when spoken by Love.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 14 - The Sound That Says, “Come”

THE SOUND

“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’” —Revelation 22:17

LISTEN

The Bible begins in a garden.

And near its conclusion, we find another garden-like world.

River.

Tree of Life.

Healing.

Presence.

And an invitation:

Come.

That word appears throughout the story.

Jesus says:

Come, follow Me.

To the weary:

Come to Me.

To Peter on the water:

Come.

And Revelation ends:

Come.

Notice the difference from Eden.

In Eden, humanity hears and hides.

By Revelation, the Spirit and the bride are saying:

Come.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Perhaps the biblical story can be heard as humanity slowly learning that the Sound approaching us does not have to make us run away.

Fear says:

Hide.

Shame says:

Cover yourself first.

Religion sometimes says:

Fix yourself and then approach.

Love says:

Come.

Not:

Come when you understand everything.

Not:

Come when you finally get your life together.

Not:

Come when you have resolved every doubt.

Simply:

Come.

Maybe repentance itself can be understood partly this way.

A turning.

A change of direction.

We were running away from the Sound.

Then something happens.

We recognize the Voice.

And we turn.

Mary.

One word:

“Mary.”

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

She turns.

Perhaps transformation begins there.

BECOME STILL

Sit somewhere peaceful if possible.

Open your hands.

Imagine nothing elaborate.

Simply hear one word:

Come.

Don't decide what it means.

Don't turn it into an assignment.

Let invitation remain invitation.

After several minutes ask:

“What would I stop running from if I truly believed Love was calling me?”

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

When God says “Come,” what part of me still wants to hide?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Make your presence invitational today.

Not intrusive.

Not controlling.

Not demanding.

Let someone experience a human version of:

You are welcome here.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 15 - Safe Enough to Listen

THE SOUND

“Be still and know that I am God.” —Psalm 46:10

LISTEN

We often tell people:

“Be still.”

But stillness can require something we don’t talk about enough.

Safety.

A frightened person scans.

A threatened person listens for danger.

A grieving person may remain alert to the next loss.

Someone who has been wounded may find silence uncomfortable because silence creates room for things they have been avoiding.

So perhaps the invitation to stillness should never become another religious demand:

You’re not hearing God because you’re not quiet enough.

That merely adds shame to noise.

Instead, Presence can become an invitation toward safety.

You don’t have to perform here.

You don’t have to impress anyone here.

You don’t have to produce a revelation.

You don’t have to hear a voice.

You don’t even have to feel peaceful.

You can simply be.

This brings us back to the womb.

Before a child understands language, there is rhythm.

Heartbeat.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Breathing.

Movement.

Voice.

Presence.

The child does not possess a theology of its mother.

It lives surrounded by her.

Presence precedes explanation.

Maybe we have made spirituality unnecessarily complicated.

Perhaps sometimes prayer is not speaking.

Perhaps sometimes prayer isn't even listening for words.

Perhaps prayer can simply become:

remaining consciously present to Presence.

Nothing to prove.

Nothing to manufacture.

Nothing to earn.

Just here.

And perhaps eventually the soul discovers:

I am safe enough to listen.

BECOME STILL

Today, don't set a timer if you don't need one.

Sit somewhere that feels peaceful.

A chair.

A porch.

Beside water.

Under a tree.

In your car.

Place one hand loosely over your heart if that feels natural.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Notice your breathing.

Then quietly say:

“Nothing is required of me in this moment.”

After a while:

“Presence is enough.”

And remain.

If you hear nothing—

remain.

If your mind wanders—

remain.

If you feel peaceful—

remain.

If you don’t—

remain.

This is not a test.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

What if God does not need me to perform in order to remain with me?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Give another human being the experience of your **non-anxious presence** today.

You don’t have to solve them.

You don’t have to give advice.

You don’t have to fill the silence.

Just remain.

Sometimes remaining is what Love sounds like.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 16 - Abraham — Go

THE SOUND

“The LORD had said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.’” —Genesis 12:1

LISTEN

Abraham receives an extraordinary instruction.

Go.

But notice what is missing.

An address.

A map.

A detailed itinerary.

An explanation of every difficulty he will encounter.

God says:

“...to the land I will show you.”

Show you.

Future tense.

Abraham must begin moving before he possesses complete sight.

Perhaps that is one of the earliest great pictures of:

“We walk by faith, not by sight.”

Abraham hears before he sees.

And then he walks according to what he heard.

We often want God to reverse that order.

Show me everything first.

Tell me exactly how this will work.

Guarantee the outcome.

Explain why.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Then I'll decide whether to move.

But perhaps faith sometimes sounds like:

Take the next step.

Not twenty steps.

Not the whole journey.

Just the next one.

Maybe you have spent so much time trying to discern God's entire plan for your life that you have overlooked the simple act of Love immediately in front of you.

Call someone.

Forgive.

Rest.

Apologize.

Begin.

Stop.

Stay.

Leave.

Give.

Listen.

Ask for help.

Perhaps the Sound doesn't always give us a five-year plan.

Sometimes it gives us enough light for **one faithful step**.

And one step becomes another.

Then another.

Eventually we look backward and realize:

The path appeared while we were walking it.

BECOME STILL

Ask yourself:

"What is the next loving step?"

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Not:

What should I do with the rest of my life?

Just:

The next loving step.

Remain quiet.

Don't force an answer.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

Am I waiting for certainty when perhaps I have already been given enough light for one step?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Take one small step today toward something you have known you need to do.

No announcement.

No dramatic declaration.

Just walk.

Faith sometimes sounds like footsteps.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 17 - Samuel — Speak, I’m Listening

THE SOUND

“Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, ‘Here I am.’” —1 Samuel 3:4

LISTEN

Samuel hears the Voice.

But he gets it wrong.

He runs to Eli.

“Here I am; you called me.”

Eli says:

I didn’t call you.

It happens again.

And again.

There is something wonderfully reassuring about this story.

Samuel is hearing God—

and doesn’t know that he’s hearing God.

Scripture doesn’t shame him for this.

God calls again.

Samuel’s inability to recognize the Voice does not stop the Voice from calling.

Eventually Eli understands what is happening and teaches Samuel how to respond:

“Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.”

Samuel had to **learn recognition**.

Maybe we do too.

We sometimes imagine spiritually mature people never misunderstand anything.

They instantly know.

Instantly discern.

Instantly interpret.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

But Samuel's story suggests something gentler.

Listening can be learned.

Discernment develops.

Recognition grows through relationship.

And sometimes we need an Eli.

Someone who doesn't become the Voice for us but helps us recognize the Voice ourselves.

A wise friend.

A spouse.

A brother.

A sister.

A spiritual companion.

Someone who can say:

"Listen again."

Maybe that is part of why this book exists.

Not to tell you what God is saying.

But perhaps to whisper:

Listen again.

BECOME STILL

Begin with Samuel's words:

"Speak, Lord. I am listening."

Then actually listen.

Don't complete God's sentences.

Don't invent an answer.

Don't panic if nothing happens.

Just become available.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

Who has helped me recognize God without trying to control what I hear?

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Become an Eli for someone today.

Don't tell them what God is saying.

Help them listen.

There is a profound difference.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 18 - Elijah — The Sound of Silence

THE SOUND

“And after the fire came a gentle whisper.” —1 Kings 19:12

LISTEN

Elijah is exhausted.

Afraid.

Isolated.

He has reached a place where he essentially says:

Enough.

Then comes wind.

Powerful.

Dramatic.

But the LORD is not in the wind.

Then earthquake.

Not there.

Then fire.

Not there.

And afterward comes the mysterious Hebrew expression:

qol demamah daqqah.

Translations struggle with it.

“A still small voice.”

“A gentle whisper.”

“A sound of sheer silence.”

Perhaps that difficulty is appropriate.

How do you describe **a sound made of stillness**?

Elijah’s story challenges our fascination with the spectacular.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

We expect God to shout because religion often shouts.

We expect God to overwhelm because power often overwhelms.

We expect God to compete with the noise.

But sometimes Presence refuses the competition entirely.

It waits beneath it.

And notice Elijah's condition.

He is exhausted.

God doesn't begin by giving him a sermon.

Before the encounter fully unfolds, Elijah sleeps.

He eats.

He rests.

He eats again.

Only then does the journey continue.

Perhaps sometimes the most spiritual thing a tired person can do is **rest**.

Exhaustion can make every sound feel urgent.

Stillness helps us distinguish urgency from Presence.

BECOME STILL

Find the quietest place available to you.

For five minutes, don't ask God anything.

Don't seek guidance.

Don't solve a problem.

Let silence remain silence.

If you hear nothing, perhaps you have succeeded.

You became still.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

Do I trust God enough to believe that silence does not mean absence?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Resist one unnecessary urgency today.

Not everything demanding your attention deserves it.

Sometimes peace sounds like:

Not now.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 19 - Isaiah — Undone

THE SOUND

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty...” —Isaiah 6:3

LISTEN

Isaiah hears a Sound.

“Holy, holy, holy...”

The thresholds shake.

The house fills with smoke.

And Isaiah says:

“Woe is me...”

Older translations give us the haunting phrase:

“I am undone.”

Something about encounter dismantles him.

Perhaps we can think about an instrument.

Place two instruments near one another.

Strike the right note on one, and under the right conditions a corresponding string on the other can begin to vibrate.

It is called **sympathetic resonance**.

The second instrument did not create the original sound.

It responded because something within it was capable of resonating.

What if formation sometimes works like that?

Presence sounds.

Something within us begins responding.

But when an instrument is out of tune, resonance also reveals the dissonance.

Perhaps that is part of Isaiah’s undoing.

He encounters something so true that everything false becomes difficult to maintain.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Performance.

Pretense.

Ego.

Shame.

Certainty.

Self-protection.

The identities we constructed because we thought they would keep us safe.

Love does not need to violently tear them away.

Sometimes we simply encounter something more real.

And the false begins loosening.

Maybe being undone is not the destruction of the human being.

Perhaps sometimes it is:

dissonance giving way to harmony.

Then Isaiah hears another Sound:

“Whom shall I send?”

And the man who began with:

“Woe is me”

eventually says:

“Here am I. Send me.”

Encounter becomes availability.

BECOME STILL

Ask:

“What am I working very hard to hold together?”

Your image?

Your certainty?

Your reputation?

Your control?

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Your need to be right?

Don't tear anything down.

Simply hold it loosely before Presence.

Then say:

“I am willing to become true.”

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

What might need to become “undone” in me—not so I become less, but so I become more fully who I was created to be?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Release one act of performance today.

You don't have to impress.

You don't have to exaggerate.

You don't have to defend an image.

Practice being simply, quietly true.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 20 - Lazarus — Come Out

THE SOUND

“Jesus called in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’” —John 11:43

LISTEN

Lazarus is dead.

Not confused.

Not struggling.

Not having a difficult season.

Dead.

The stone is already in place.

The mourners have arrived.

The grief has begun.

Martha even warns Jesus about opening the tomb.

This story has moved beyond human possibility.

And then Jesus speaks.

“Lazarus, come out!”

Imagine that.

A Voice enters a place where no living person expects a response.

And something dead hears.

This connects with something Jesus says elsewhere:

“The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.”

There are places within us that may feel entombed.

A dream.

Trust.

Joy.

Hope.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

A relationship.

Our ability to imagine something new.

A part of ourselves we stopped visiting years ago because we concluded:

Nothing lives there anymore.

But perhaps resurrection begins when Life speaks into places we have already pronounced dead.

This doesn't mean every loss will be reversed.

It doesn't mean every relationship will be restored exactly as it was.

It doesn't mean faith prevents death or grief.

Lazarus himself would one day die again.

The deeper revelation is this:

Death does not get exclusive speaking rights.

Jesus stands before the tomb.

Grief is speaking.

Finality is speaking.

Memory is speaking.

The stone is speaking.

But then Life speaks too.

And Life says:

Come out.

There are places within us that may have forgotten the Sound of Life—

but Life has not forgotten our name.

BECOME STILL

Don't immediately think about what needs "resurrected."

Just sit with Jesus outside the tomb.

There is grief here.

Jesus Himself weeps.

So you do not have to rush past sadness to reach resurrection.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Let grief and hope occupy the same space.

Then quietly ask:

“Is there something in me You are inviting toward Life?”

Listen.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

What have I declared permanently dead that perhaps I should stop pronouncing final judgment over?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Do one small thing today that belongs to Life.

Open the curtains.

Call the friend.

Take the walk.

Write one paragraph.

Plant something.

Laugh without feeling guilty.

Begin again.

Sometimes resurrection starts with something as ordinary as:

coming outside.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 21 - Faith Comes by Hearing

THE SOUND

“Consequently, faith comes from hearing...” —Romans 10:17

LISTEN

We often think faith begins with us.

I need more faith.

I need to believe harder.

I need to become more certain.

But Paul gives us another starting place:

Hearing.

Something sounds first.

Then something within us responds.

That changes the posture of faith.

Faith isn't necessarily squeezing our eyes shut and forcing ourselves to believe something for which we have no evidence.

Perhaps faith is more like **recognition**.

Something within us hears:

This sounds like Life.

This sounds like Love.

This sounds like Jesus.

And we begin leaning toward it.

Romans 10 becomes particularly beautiful when heard this way.

Paul writes about the mouth confessing Jesus as Lord and the heart believing that God raised Him from the dead.

We have sometimes reduced those words to a transaction:

Say the correct thing.

Believe the correct proposition.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Then God will respond.

But notice the larger movement.

There is proclamation.

There is hearing.

There is believing.

There is confession.

Something has been heard.

Something awakens within the heart.

And eventually the human voice begins **sounding what it has heard.**

Confession isn't a magic password.

It is response.

The Sound produces an echo.

God sounds.

Humanity answers.

"I hear You."

Perhaps that's why confession eventually becomes larger than words.

If I confess Love with my mouth but consistently walk in hatred, what sound is my life actually making?

If I confess grace while treating people without grace, which confession will they hear?

Eventually—

our walk becomes our confession.

BECOME STILL

Don't ask yourself today:

"Do I have enough faith?"

Ask instead:

"What have I been listening to?"

Fear?

Hope?

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Shame?

Love?

Anger?

Grace?

Remain quiet.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

What has my life been confessing lately, regardless of what my mouth says?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Let one action today agree with what you say you believe.

If you believe in grace—

give grace.

If you believe in forgiveness—

begin forgiving.

If you believe people have dignity—

treat someone accordingly.

Let your feet agree with your mouth.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 22 - Walking Before Seeing

THE SOUND

“For we walk by faith, not by sight.” —2 Corinthians 5:7

LISTEN

Notice Paul’s word:

Walk.

Not:

We think by faith.

Not:

We argue by faith.

Not:

We explain by faith.

We walk.

Movement.

Perhaps that is why Scripture repeatedly gives us people who hear before they see.

Abraham doesn’t see the destination.

He hears:

Go.

Moses doesn’t see Israel liberated.

He hears:

I am sending you.

Isaiah doesn’t see how his mission will end.

He hears:

Whom shall I send?

Peter doesn’t see Pentecost, resurrection, or the Church.

He hears:

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Follow Me.

Mary doesn't recognize Jesus with her eyes.

She hears:

Mary.

And turns.

Sometimes the deepest realities are **heard before they are seen**.

This does not mean faith is irrational.

Nor does it mean we should blindly follow every impression that enters our minds.

Discernment matters.

Wisdom matters.

Community matters.

Truth matters.

But sometimes there comes a moment when all available information has been gathered and certainty still has not arrived.

Then we have to walk.

Perhaps faith is not knowing exactly where the road ends.

Perhaps faith is knowing enough about **the character of the Voice** to take the next step.

BECOME STILL

Bring one uncertainty to mind.

Not ten.

One.

Ask:

“What can I faithfully do today without knowing the entire outcome?”

Wait.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

Am I asking sight to give me something that can only be discovered by walking?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Take one step.

Not because you know everything.

But because you know enough to move toward Love.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 23 - Your Walk Has a Sound

THE SOUND

“When they saw the courage of Peter and John... they took note that these men had been with Jesus.” —Acts 4:13

LISTEN

Something had happened to Peter and John.

People could tell.

They were described as ordinary, unschooled men.

Yet something about them carried evidence of encounter.

They had been with Jesus.

Perhaps Presence leaves residue.

You spend enough time around a fire and eventually you carry the smell of smoke.

You spend enough time around fear and perhaps fear gets into your movements.

You spend enough time around anger and anger can become your tone.

But what happens when someone spends enough time around Love?

Perhaps Love gets into the walk.

The world doesn't necessarily need more people announcing:

“God told me...”

It needs people whose lives make God recognizable.

Mercy becomes a Sound.

Forgiveness becomes a Sound.

Generosity becomes a Sound.

Humility becomes a Sound.

Sitting quietly beside someone who is grieving becomes a Sound.

Refusing to shame someone becomes a Sound.

Remaining present when everyone else leaves becomes a Sound.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Perhaps this is part of what we mean by saying:

Our walk is a prophetic sound.

Prophecy need not be reduced to predicting future events.

At its heart, the prophetic reveals something.

What if your life can reveal something about the character of God before you ever say His name?

Perhaps the prophetic is sometimes less:

“I have a message from God for you.”

And more:

“Something of God has become audible through the way I am living.”

BECOME STILL

Ask: **“If someone knew God only through the way I treated them yesterday, what would they think God sounds like?”**

Don’t condemn yourself.

Just listen.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

What characteristic of Jesus do I most want my life to make audible?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Choose one:

Mercy.

Patience.

Kindness.

Courage.

Generosity.

Presence.

Carry it deliberately today.

Let somebody hear without your needing to preach.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 24 - Mercy Is a Prophetic Sound

THE SOUND

“I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” —Matthew 9:13

LISTEN

We have often associated the prophetic with volume.

Declarations.

Warnings.

Predictions.

Platforms.

Someone standing before others saying:

“Thus says the Lord.”

But Jesus repeatedly reveals God in quieter ways.

A hand touching someone considered untouchable.

A meal shared with people religion had categorized incorrectly.

Children welcomed.

A woman protected from humiliation.

A grieving sister heard.

Feet washed.

An enemy forgiven.

What if mercy is prophetic because mercy tells the truth about God?

When you refuse to shame someone—

something sounds.

When you forgive—

something sounds.

When you sit beside someone who cannot fix their grief—

something sounds.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

When you protect someone's dignity— **something sounds.**

When you give without needing recognition— **something sounds.**

When you remain present after someone has failed— **something sounds.**

Perhaps these acts proclaim something more convincingly than many sermons:

This is what Love is like.

Jesus says people will recognize His disciples by their love.

Not primarily by their vocabulary.

Not their certainty.

Not their ability to win arguments.

Love.

Perhaps the world has heard enough religious noise.

Maybe it is listening for a different Sound.

BECOME STILL

Think of someone who needs mercy from you.

It may even be you.

Don't immediately decide what mercy requires.

Mercy doesn't always mean removing boundaries.

Mercy isn't pretending something harmful didn't happen.

Simply ask: **"What would Love sound like here?"**

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

Where has my desire to be right become louder than my desire to love?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Perform one quiet act of mercy today.

Tell no one.

Let the act itself become the Sound.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 25 - What Sound Do I Leave Behind?

THE SOUND

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”
—1 Corinthians 13:13

LISTEN

Some people remain in the room long after they have left it.

Their presence lingers.

Their laughter.

Their words.

Their kindness.

Sometimes their wounds.

Sometimes their anger.

Sometimes their love.

We know something about this personally.

Our father’s name was **Vito**.

He came from Italy and carried a thick Italian accent that was unmistakably his.

His voice could be mesmerizing.

And sometimes intimidating.

When Dad spoke, you knew he was there.

But there was another way you knew Vito had been in the room.

Signature.

That was the name of a cologne he loved.

And our father was generous with it.

Very generous.

He poured it on.

Sometimes you could smell Dad coming.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

And after he left, the fragrance remained.

Only years later did the name strike us:

Signature.

How appropriate.

Because isn't that what a life leaves?

A signature.

Something that says:

I was here.

Our father's physical voice eventually became quiet.

The fragrance disappeared.

But something remained.

His *qol*—his sound.

His *kavod*—the weight of his presence.

Something of his *doxa*—the love that became visible through him.

But Vito's story cannot be told alone.

Beside him was our beautiful mother, **Gloria**.

Her Sound was different.

Perhaps quieter.

Where Dad could fill the room, Mom often helped **hold the room together**.

She knew his gifts.

She knew his failures.

She knew his humanity.

And she remained.

Her faithfulness had a Sound.

Her endurance had a Sound.

Her forgiveness had a Sound.

Her love had a Sound.

Our parents were not perfect people.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

That isn't the story.

The story is that **human lives leave echoes**.

And now their sons carry some of those echoes forward.

Perhaps you do too.

There are people whose voices live inside you.

Some beautiful.

Some painful.

Some you may need to release.

Some you hope never to forget.

But today the question isn't merely:

“What sound did they leave in me?”

There is another question:

“What sound am I leaving in others?”

When your children remember your footsteps—

what will they hear?

When your grandchildren remember your voice—

what will they feel?

When your spouse remembers difficult seasons—

what will remain?

When someone remembers you after you are no longer in the room—

what will be your **Signature**?

BECOME STILL

Think of someone whose presence changed you.

Hear their voice if you can.

Remember their face.

Remember how you felt around them.

Say quietly:

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

“Thank you.”

Then turn the question toward yourself:

“What am I leaving behind?”

Remain still.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

What do I hope someone will feel someday when they remember the sound of my life?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Before you leave someone’s presence today, leave something worth remembering.

A kind word.

A touch.

A laugh.

An apology.

Encouragement.

Attention.

Love.

You never know which ordinary moment will become someone’s lasting echo.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 26 - Qol — The Sound We Hear

THE SOUND

“They heard the sound of the LORD God... in the garden...” —Genesis 3:8

LISTEN

We return to where we began.

The garden.

The Hebrew word *qol* can mean **sound, voice, noise, proclamation.**

Adam and Eve hear the *qol* of YHWH moving through the garden.

And they hide.

Twenty-five days ago, we began wondering:

What if the Sound wasn't the problem?

What if fear changed the way humanity interpreted the Sound?

That question has followed us throughout this journey.

We have listened to creation.

We have heard Jesus.

We have stood beside Mary in the garden.

We have listened with Samuel.

We have entered Elijah's silence.

We have become undone with Isaiah.

We have stood outside Lazarus's tomb.

We have considered the sounds left within us by parents, religion, trauma, shame, grief, and fear.

And perhaps we can now return to Eden with different ears.

Adam heard the Sound and asked, in effect:

“What does this mean about me?”

Fear answered:

Danger. Hide.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

But what if the deeper invitation was always:

Come closer.

Perhaps spiritual formation is not learning some secret language available only to unusually spiritual people.

Perhaps it is becoming familiar enough with Love that we recognize its Sound when it approaches.

Jesus said:

“My sheep hear my voice.”

Recognition.

Not achievement.

Relationship.

Maybe after all these days, the question isn't:

“Did God speak to me?”

Perhaps it is:

“Am I becoming familiar with what Love sounds like?”

BECOME STILL

Return to the practice from Day 1.

Three minutes.

Listen.

Nearby sounds.

Distant sounds.

Your breathing.

The room.

The world.

Don't search for a supernatural voice.

Simply become available.

Then quietly say:

“I am listening.”

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

After a while:

“Teach me the Sound of Love.”

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

After this journey, what sounds different to me about God?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Listen carefully to one person today.

Not to prepare your response.

Not to solve them.

Listen until they experience being heard.

Sometimes the first echo of God we give another person is simply:

attention.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 27 - Kavod — The Presence We Carry

THE SOUND

“The heavens declare the glory of God...” —Psalm 19:1

LISTEN

The Hebrew word *kavod* is commonly translated **glory** or **honor**, with an underlying sense of weight or significance.

Something substantial.

Something that matters.

We often imagine God’s glory as spectacular.

Light.

Thunder.

Majesty.

Something overwhelming.

And Scripture certainly gives us those images.

But perhaps *kavod* can also help us think about **weighty presence**.

You have probably met people whose presence carried weight.

Not because they were famous.

Not because they were loud.

Not because they possessed titles.

Something about them simply made you want to remain nearby.

They listened.

They were settled.

They didn’t need to dominate the room.

They weren’t trying to extract anything from you.

You felt seen.

You felt safe.

You felt more human around them.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Perhaps that kind of presence cannot be manufactured.

It develops.

Slowly.

Quietly.

Through suffering.

Forgiveness.

Humility.

Failure.

Grace.

Years of learning what matters and what does not.

Years of discovering that you don't need to be the loudest person in the room to carry weight.

This is one of the great differences between **noise and Presence**.

Noise demands attention.

Presence does not have to.

Our father Vito could certainly make noise.

Those who knew him might smile at that.

But underneath his unmistakable voice was something else.

A weight.

A presence.

And our mother Gloria carried weight differently.

Her *kavod* didn't need to sound like his.

Neither does yours need to sound like anyone else's.

Formation isn't becoming someone else.

It is becoming increasingly available for Love to inhabit **the person you actually are**.

BECOME STILL

Sit without saying anything.

Don't try to feel God.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Don't try to become spiritual.

Simply become present.

Then ask:

“What am I carrying into rooms?”

Anxiety?

Peace?

Judgment?

Curiosity?

Need?

Love?

Don't condemn what you discover.

Simply notice.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

When I enter someone's life, what weight does my presence carry?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Enter one room differently today.

Don't enter needing to be noticed.

Enter noticing.

Don't ask:

“What can I get from this room?”

Ask:

“What can my presence give?”

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 28 - Doxa — When Love Becomes Visible

THE SOUND

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory...”
—John 1:14

LISTEN

The Greek word *doxa* is commonly translated **glory, honor, or splendor**.

And here John makes an astonishing claim:

Glory became visible in a human life.

“The Word became flesh...”

God did not merely send another explanation.

The Word became embodied.

Touchable.

Observable.

Present.

And perhaps that gives us a beautiful way of thinking about *doxa*.

Not simply spectacular light.

Not religious performance.

But something invisible becoming perceptible.

Love taking form.

Jesus says:

Love your enemy.

Then He does.

He says:

Forgive.

Then from the cross:

“Father, forgive them.”

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30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

He teaches service.

Then kneels and washes feet.

He speaks of compassion.

Then weeps beside a tomb.

The Word becomes flesh.

The Sound becomes walk.

The invisible becomes visible.

Doxa.

Perhaps this is where our journey has been leading.

We hear *qol*.

We carry *kavod*.

And eventually something becomes visible:

doxa.

Not because we become divine spectacles.

Because Love acquires hands.

Feet.

Eyes.

A voice.

A chair pulled beside someone who is grieving.

A meal delivered.

An apology offered.

A boundary spoken without hatred.

A hand held.

A person forgiven.

A stranger welcomed.

Love becomes visible.

BECOME STILL

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Look at your hands.

Really look at them.

These hands have carried things.

Held people.

Worked.

Perhaps hurt.

Perhaps healed.

Open them.

Ask:

“How can Love become visible through these hands today?”

Then listen.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

If God’s love wanted to become visible through my ordinary life today, what might it look like?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Make Love tangible.

Don’t merely feel compassion.

Give it a body.

Do something.

Let someone see what you have heard.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 29 - The Sound Our Children Will Hear

THE SOUND

“The things revealed belong to us and to our children forever...” —Deuteronomy 29:29

LISTEN

Eventually every generation becomes an echo.

We inherit sounds.

Then we leave sounds behind.

Our father Vito inherited sounds from another world, another culture, another generation.

Our mother Gloria carried her own.

Their sounds entered their sons.

And their sons have spent years deciding what to preserve, what to question, what to heal, and what to pass forward.

Perhaps that is what every generation must do.

We should be careful about handing our children **our noise** and calling it God.

Our denominational battles.

Our unresolved fears.

Our prejudices.

Our need for certainty.

Our theological anxieties.

Our categories.

Our shame.

Those things can travel through generations while wearing sacred language.

But perhaps our children deserve something deeper.

Not merely:

“Believe exactly what I believe.”

Perhaps:

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

“Let me help you recognize the Sound.”

Let them see us question without becoming cynical.

Let them see us believe without becoming arrogant.

Let them hear us apologize.

Let them watch us change our minds.

Let them see us treat people with dignity.

Let them discover that faith does not require pretending.

Let them hear us say:

“I don’t know.”

And let them hear us say:

“But I trust Love.”

Maybe our task isn’t to give the next generation every answer.

Maybe our task is to help create an environment in which they are **safe enough to listen**.

Then one day they may hear something we never heard.

See something we never saw.

Understand something we could not understand.

And perhaps instead of threatening us, that should fill us with hope.

Because the secret things belong to God.

But the things revealed—

belong to us and to our children.

BECOME STILL

Think about the generation coming behind you.

Children.

Grandchildren.

Students.

Younger colleagues.

People whose lives your life touches.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Ask:

“What am I handing them?”

Fear?

Certainty?

Curiosity?

Grace?

Love?

A system?

Or an invitation to listen?

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

What religious noise do I want to stop with me—and what Sound do I hope continues beyond me?

WALK FROM THE SOUND

Give someone younger than you permission today.

Permission to ask.

Permission to wonder.

Permission not to know.

Permission to discover.

You don't have to hand them your conclusions.

Perhaps you can give them something better:

ears that remain open.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

DAY 30 - Become an Echo

THE SOUND

“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come!’”
—Revelation 22:17

LISTEN

Read that again.

Slowly.

“The Spirit...says, ‘Come!’”

And then:

“Let the one who hears say, ‘Come!’”

There is our entire journey.

Something sounds.

Someone hears.

And eventually—

the hearer becomes a sound.

Perhaps that is what these thirty days have been about.

At first:

We hear the Sound.

Then:

We recognize the Sound.

Then:

We turn toward the Sound.

Then:

We walk toward the Sound.

Eventually:

We live from the Sound.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

And finally:

our walk becomes a prophetic Sound to others.

The Sound produces an echo.

Not an exact reproduction.

An echo carries something of the original Sound into another place.

Maybe that is our calling.

Not to become God.

Not to speak for God in every situation.

Not to announce:

“God told me...”

But to become so formed by Love that something of Love reverberates through our ordinary lives.

Mercy.

Grace.

Presence.

Forgiveness.

Courage.

Truth.

Compassion.

Generosity.

Hospitality.

Stillness.

Love.

Perhaps someone encounters you and doesn't know anything about your theology.

They don't know your denomination.

They haven't read your books.

They don't know your beliefs.

But something about your presence tells their frightened soul:

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

You don't have to hide here.

What if that is prophetic?

What if someone who has spent a lifetime believing God is angry encounters you and, for one moment, **God sounds safe**?

What if someone who believes they are worthless experiences dignity in your presence?

What if someone who expects abandonment discovers that you remain?

What if someone grieving discovers you aren't frightened by their tears?

What if someone ashamed discovers that you won't join the voices condemning them?

Something has become audible.

The Sound you heard has gotten into your walk.

Qol.

The Sound you heard.

Kavod.

The Presence you learned to carry.

Doxa.

The Love that became visible.

And then something extraordinary happens.

Someone else hears.

BECOME STILL

For the final practice, don't read further immediately.

Put this devotional down.

Find somewhere quiet.

Under a tree.

Beside water.

Near a window.

On a mountain.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

In a field.

In your favorite chair.

Wherever you have learned to become present.

Sit.

Don't ask for anything.

Don't manufacture anything.

Don't try to hear words.

Listen.

Perhaps you will hear birds.

Traffic.

Wind.

Water.

Children.

Your own breathing.

Perhaps silence.

Let it all be.

Then quietly say:

"I am listening."

Wait.

And after a while:

"Here I am."

Wait again.

Finally:

"Let my life sound like Love."

And remain.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

There is only one question today:

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

What Sound do I want my life to leave behind?

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

A FINAL WORD

Signature

One day, every one of us will leave the room.

Our footsteps will stop.

Our voices will become quiet.

The chairs we occupied will belong to someone else.

And eventually much of what seemed terribly important to us will be forgotten.

But something remains.

We learned that early without knowing we were learning it.

Our father, **Vito**, wore a cologne called **Signature**.

And Dad didn't wear a little of it.

He poured it on.

You knew he had entered the room.

And sometimes after he left—

you still knew he had been there.

The fragrance remained.

How fitting that it was called *Signature*.

Our beautiful mother, **Gloria**, left a different fragrance.

Not from a bottle.

From remaining.

From enduring.

From loving an imperfect man through both his gifts and his failures.

From helping hold together the room in which three sons were becoming men.

Our brother **Mario** carries his own Signature.

Pain could have made his world smaller.

Instead, somehow, love continued becoming larger.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

His wife.

His children.

His grandchildren.

His family.

He demonstrates love.

He shows up.

He remains.

Perhaps every human life leaves something like that.

A fragrance.

An echo.

A presence.

A Signature.

Which brings us all the way back to the beginning.

Before religion—

God sounded.

Before humanity spoke—

God spoke.

Before we knew how to call God's name—

we existed because Life had already called us into being.

And perhaps salvation, formation, awakening—whatever language we use for this great mystery—is not primarily humanity shouting loudly enough for God to respond.

Perhaps:

God sounded first.

And we awakened.

We heard.

We recognized.

We turned.

We walked.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

And slowly, almost imperceptibly—

we began sounding like what we had been listening to.

So when you finish these pages, please don't immediately reach for another book.

Go outside.

Sit somewhere beautiful.

Become quiet.

Listen again.

Because the question with which we began remains:

Do You Hear What I Hear?

Maybe you do.

Maybe you don't.

Maybe you hear something we have never heard.

Keep listening.

The Sound is larger than our understanding of it.

The mystery is larger than our words.

And Love is larger than our explanations.

Hear the Sound.

Run toward the Sound.

Live from the Sound.

Become an echo of the Sound.

And one day, when you have left the room, may something beautiful remain—

A fragrance.

An echo.

A presence.

A Signature.

May your children hear it.

May your grandchildren hear it.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

May frightened people hear it.

May grieving people hear it.

May people who have forgotten what Love sounds like hear it.

And perhaps someone who encounters the echo of your life will recognize something strangely familiar.

Perhaps they will become quiet.

Perhaps they will listen.

And perhaps somewhere deep within themselves they will whisper:

“I know that Sound.”

May Love be our Signature.

— Carlo Griseta & Vito Griseta

with gratitude for our brother,

Mario Griseta

The Presence Network

www.ThePresenceNetwork.org

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

AFTER THE THIRTY DAYS

Keep Listening

Thirty days have passed.

But listening does not end here.

In fact, perhaps one of the dangers of a devotional like this is that we can finish it.

We turn the final page.

Close the book.

Place it on a shelf.

And unconsciously think:

Completed.

But Presence cannot be completed.

There is no graduation from listening.

There is no certificate for stillness.

There is no point at which we finally understand God sufficiently that mystery disappears.

Perhaps the opposite occurs.

The longer we listen, the more comfortable we become saying:

I don't know.

The longer we walk with God, the less threatened we become by mystery.

The longer we encounter Love, the less interested we become in controlling everyone else's understanding of it.

We simply keep listening.

When You Hear Nothing

There will be mornings when you sit quietly and experience absolutely nothing.

No revelation.

No unusual thought.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

No warmth.

No clarity.

No sense of Presence.

Nothing.

Please don't conclude that you failed.

And please don't conclude that God left.

Remember the womb.

A child does not need to consciously recognize its mother's heartbeat every moment in order to remain surrounded by her life.

Presence can precede awareness.

There may be seasons when faith is not hearing a beautiful Sound.

Faith may simply be remaining available in the silence.

Elijah discovered something of God in *qol demamah daqqah*—that mysterious sound of thinness, stillness, silence.

Maybe silence isn't always the absence of the Sound.

Sometimes silence is part of its music.

When You Hear Too Much

There will also be seasons when everything seems to have a voice.

Your fear speaks.

Your desires speak.

Religion speaks.

Social media speaks.

News speaks.

People speak.

Your past speaks.

Your wounds speak.

And occasionally someone will confidently tell you:

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

“God told me something about you.”

Listen carefully.

But don’t surrender your discernment.

This devotional was never intended to teach you to call every internal impression God.

Quite the opposite.

We hope it has encouraged you to become slower about doing that.

Ask:

Does this sound like Jesus?

Does it carry the character of Love?

Does it produce life?

Does it restore dignity?

Does it move me toward truth without requiring contempt?

Does it make me more capable of loving God and my neighbor?

Does it produce humility—or superiority?

Does it invite—or manipulate?

Does it clarify—or control?

And sometimes the wisest response remains:

“I don’t know yet.”

There is no shame in listening again.

Samuel needed to.

So do we.

When You Hear Differently Than We Do

This may be one of the most important things we can say at the end of this book:

You do not have to hear everything exactly as we hear it.

If this book simply replaces someone else’s rigid certainty with ours, we have failed.

Vito and Carlo are still listening.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

Mario is still listening.

We are still questioning.

Still discovering.

Still changing.

Still learning.

There are things we understand differently today than we did twenty years ago.

We hope that continues.

Because perhaps maturity isn't having fewer questions.

Perhaps maturity is becoming **less frightened by the questions.**

There are secret things.

There are revealed things.

And there is mystery.

We can live there without fear.

A Simple Practice for the Days Ahead

You don't need another thirty-day program.

Take the rhythm you've already learned with you:

Listen.

Recognize.

Discern.

Respond.

Walk.

Become.

When life becomes noisy:

Listen.

When fear tells you what God sounds like:

Recognize.

When competing voices demand obedience:

Discern.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

When Love becomes clear:

Respond.

When you cannot see the entire road:

Walk.

And through years of doing this:

Become.

Become the kind of person whose presence carries something of the Sound you have learned to recognize.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

A Blessing for the Listener

May you hear beneath the noise.

May you recognize beneath the echoes.

May you become still without becoming afraid of the silence.

May you question without becoming cynical.

May you believe without becoming arrogant.

May you hold truth without using it as a weapon.

May you discover that mystery is not the enemy of faith.

May you recognize the Voice that calls you by name.

When shame says **Hide,**

may you hear Presence ask,

“Where are you?”

When fear says **Run,**

may you hear Love say,

“Come.”

When failure says **It’s over,**

may you hear Life say,

“Come out.”

When uncertainty says **Don’t move until you can see everything,**

may you hear the quiet invitation,

“Walk.”

And when the world becomes so noisy that you can no longer distinguish one voice from another,

may you remember:

You do not have to chase the Sound.

Become still.

Listen again.

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

May your *qol* carry kindness.

May your *kavod* carry Presence.

May your *doxa* reveal Love.

May your children inherit something deeper than your conclusions.

May they inherit your curiosity.

Your humility.

Your wonder.

Your willingness to listen.

May the frightened feel safer because you entered the room.

May the grieving feel less alone because you remained.

May the ashamed rediscover dignity because you refused to condemn them.

May those who have only known an angry God hear something different in the way you love.

And when your footsteps finally become quiet—
may something remain.

A fragrance.

An echo.

A Presence.

A Signature.

And may someone, somewhere, hear Love in the echo of your life and recognize:

“I know that Sound.”

One More Thing...

And here I think we should do something unusual with the **very last page of the devotional**.

Almost entirely blank.

No teaching.

No explanation.

At the center of the page, simply:

WAKING TO THE SOUND

30 Days of Listening, Presence, and Becoming

What do you hear?

Then considerable white space beneath it for the reader to write.

And at the very bottom:

Be still.

Listen.

Then walk from what you hear.