

The Great Dance

By Amy Wallace

Ever wondered how to listen to God? I have. For most of my life I've tried to figure out how to be still before God and hear Him speak. I've listened to sermon after sermon on how to pray and how people in the Bible listened to God. I've memorized scriptures, read tons of books on prayer, and even taught people how to pray. I've tried to write down all the distracting stuff like to-do lists before I prayed. Funny, I still struggled to listen to God. I knew all the right steps, but nothing worked.

Or so I thought.

First off, I didn't know the right steps. It was like learning to dance the jitterbug by reading the steps in a book. You could read all the how-to facts, but still look like an Energizer Bunny with a couple screws loose trying to dance.

Sort of like learning to listen to God by knowing all about how to do it, but still not experiencing the dance.

Want to learn some new steps?

While this could appear like another how-to exercise that leads to bunny hopping nowhere, it's not. It's not a "three steps you must do to hear the Lord" lecture. It's my personal experience, the path where I finally learned to hear God and dance. You have my permission to take what helps and toss the rest. We won't all dance this dance to the same tune.

What matters is that you join the dance.

The first step is obvious, but not as simple as it sounds. In fact, it's the hardest step of all. It's running to God. Instead of using coping mechanisms we've all learned like anger or pretending it's all okay, this step consists of climbing up into your Heavenly Daddy's lap and asking, "What's going on in my heart?" Literally ask the Lord, "What am I afraid of, what lie am I believing that's causing me to feel angry or want to run away?" Or "What is it about this good thing that leaves me wanting more?"

In other words, when you get alone with God, let the story of your heart pour out. Acknowledge what you feel, then ask God to identify the messages on your heart. Ask what the thoughts and memories say about you. Together drag the messages out into the light.

Remember, it's your responsibility alone to attend to your feelings. That's when you start the dance. It's you and God ~ what a beautiful team.

One caution: Don't should yourself. Let go of the "I shouldn't feel this way." "I should do this or that."

Ask the Lord what's going on in your heart. Don't try to figure it out. Because any time the mind and heart fight, the heart always wins. You will live out of what you believe in your heart, not what you think you should believe.

For example: We know God says we're His delight (Zephaniah 3:17). But we still dress to impress the opposite sex, don't we? Why? Because even though we know the truth and know it's what we should believe, we don't. Not in our heart. Not until we move from this step to the next.

The second dance step is a continuation of the first, with a slightly different, often exciting twist. It's all about hanging out with the Lord and allowing yourself to feel. Feel the pain that you stuffed into the dark along with the messages the enemy scribbled on your heart. Feel the sorrow. Let it come. Allow yourself to reach in and explore your heart.

Take your time here. Imagine a slow dance to your favorite song.

Or picture yourself as a child nestled safely in the Lord's arms.

Ask God what He says about you, what He sees. Ask your Heavenly Daddy what He values about you specifically.

Then listen closely. He has a beautiful song to sing about the wonder and joy He feels toward you, His dearly loved child. (Ephesians 5:1; Colossians 3:12)

Our third dance step often feels like a tango. It's all about taking care of yourself. Hard to do in the busyness we call life. After you've spent time talking to the Lord and then listening to what He says about you, remember God commanded we love our neighbor AS ourselves. We can't truly love others, unless we love ourselves.

Love and take care of yourself. It's the best gift you can give to the people around you.

When you love yourself, you won't spend hours crying because that cute guy at school didn't ask you out. You also won't get so uptight and worried over a bad hair day. You'll find yourself less demanding of others to make you feel okay~ which they can't do~ and more available to give of yourself because you're getting filled by God.

When you love yourself by dancing with the Lord, your heart will overflow. That kind of life won't come from striving to give and serve. But from the fullness of your heart, streams of living water will flow.

The fourth dance step is the grand finale. It's about forgiving from the heart. When you've spent time listening to the Lord reveal the lies you've lived from and then sing His truth in their place, forgiveness flows naturally.

Forgiveness flows naturally because a heart cleared of the enemy's messages and full of the Lord's truth no longer needs to keep a strangle hold, demanding repayment from those who have wronged it. A full heart lets God heal the hurt and take care of the hurtful person in His way and in His time.

For example, when someone spreads a rumor about you at school or at church, you'll run to God quicker and be less likely to pay them back by starting a rumor of your own. You will even find yourself praying for that person, following God's lead and praying like Jesus, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing."

Be aware, this is the hardest dance you will ever learn. But it's also the most fulfilling.

It's what you were created to experience.

Intimacy. Fullness. Abundant life. Forgiveness.

You're learning to dance to a steady rhythm of grace with the greatest partner of all. You're molding into a graceful couple, following God's lead, keeping in step with His steps, and enjoying the dance.

Listen closely.

He's playing your song.

My Beloved Princess,

You are my precious daughter. I love you with an everlasting love. I rejoice over you with singing. I your Maker am your Husband. I delight in you. You are the apple of my eye and I long for you to come to Me.

You are My workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which I have prepared before the foundation of the world for you to do, in My strength, by the power of My Holy Spirit within you.

Dance with Me.

I know your heart and how you don't feel worthy of this love. Listen to the Truth. You are Mine and I will perfect the work I began in you. Nothing, not distress or peril, death or life, or any created thing will stop My work or separate Me from you. You were chosen before the foundation of the world and no one will snatch you from My hand.

I love you.

Forever.

Take my hand and follow my lead.

Come home.

Come join the dance.

Love,

Your Abba

How did it feel to read a love letter from God to you? Do you believe His words?

Look up Isaiah 62:4-5 and Zephaniah 3:17. What is the Lord saying to your heart?

Read Zechariah 2:8. What does it mean to be the “Apple of His eye?”
