



The Sacred Echo

Why Is Prayer So Mysterious?

By Margaret Feinberg

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About

Margaret Feinberg

Margaret Feinberg is a popular teacher and speaker at churches and leading conferences such as Catalyst, Thrive, and Extraordinary Women. Her books and Bible studies have sold over 600,000 copies and received critical acclaim and extensive national media coverage from CNN, the Associated Press, USA Today, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, and more.



She was recently named one of the 50 women most shaping culture and the church today by Christianity Today, one of the 30 voices who will help lead the church in the next decade by *Charisma* magazine, and one of the '40 Under 40' who will shape Christian publishing by *Christian Retailing* magazine.

Margaret currently lives in Morrison, Colorado, with her 6'8" husband, Leif.

If you want to put a smile on her face, go ahead and drop her a line:

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Letter to Readers

As I grow in my relationship with God, I find that he often uses the repetition of a phrase, word or idea represented in Scripture not only to get, but also to keep my attention. I call those moments “sacred echoes.”

More and more, I’m finding that I need the sacred echo—the persistent voice of God—almost as if my life depended on it. The sacred echo reminds me he has not departed, he is steadfast, and he has not given up on me. If truth be told, as I grow older, I’m finding I need more certainty—not less—in responding to God’s prompting in my life. Faith is not just moving forward when God seems far off. Faith is sometimes waiting until he is near to take the first step.

Now I’m taking one of those steps. In *The Sacred Echo 6-Session DVD Bible Study*, I am going to share some of my most intimate prayers with you; those people, places, and things I pray for steadily, sometimes with no reply, as well as those tender words I hear God echoing in my life time and time again. To be completely honest, sharing these prayers scares me.

My real fear is in being laid bare. Prayer is the place where I’m invited to present the parts of myself that no one else sees to a God who already knows and loves me anyway.

You see, for me, my relationship with God is one of the most personal things I have. The tenderness of his presence. The longing to linger with him. The love that grips my heart and won’t let go. I am in love—that I won’t deny. As in any serious love affair, some things are meant to be kept just between the two of you. The problem is that for months now I’ve been sensing this consistent nudge to share some of the things I’m discovering about God. This holy prodding has become so loud and clear through conversations, sermons, and books that even my husband, Leif, can hear it. Though I feel like I’m walking in obedience, I still can’t shake the fear of transparency because the words God speaks to my heart expose me like no other.

Through the book, *The Sacred Echo*, as well as this Bible study, I am expectant that the Spirit will further illuminate his presence in your life. You will hear his voice. You will feel his gentle prodding. You will find rest in the love he sings over you.

My prayer is that you will begin to discover God’s voice in your life not just as a whisper but also as an echo, and that you’ll experience a contagious spiritual awakening that can only come from knowing God.

Blessings,
Margaret

session .001

Echoes



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Luke 18:1-8: The persistent widow.

Real-life story: David & Sherry

1 Kings 19:9-12: Elijah stands in the presence of the Lord.

Acts 17:11: The Bereans examine Scripture.

discussion & study

What aspects of prayer come easily to you?

In the video, Margaret describes struggling to maintain a steady prayer life. Have you ever struggled to maintain a steady prayer life? If so, describe. What kinds of things keep you from praying on a regular basis?

Read Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and Ephesians 6:18. With so many clear directives in the Bible that we are to pray continually, why do you think prayer remains such a mystery and challenge for so many people? In what ways does it remain a mystery and challenge for you?

“God’s Word is like a megaphone to his people. We recognize his voice best when we spend time listening to what he has to say through Scripture on a daily basis.”


—*The Sacred Echo*, pg 24

Margaret describes finding something that finally worked in her prayer life—creating a prayer list in the back of her Bible. Have you ever found anything that “worked” in your prayer life? Are you still using it in your prayer life? Why or why not?

Read Luke 18:1-14. What do these back-to-back parables reveal about prayer?

In the video, David and Sherry talked about the agony they went through with their daughter’s liver failure. And even after a transplant, when Tatum got cancer, they still wonder if God is listening. Do you have some unanswered prayer in your life?

What was the most encouraging part of David and Sherry’s story for you?



Read 1 Kings 19:1-18. Have you ever had a rock-bottom Elijah-like moment when God met you and spoke life back into you? If so, describe.

Do you think the repetitive nature of the wind, fire, and earthquake got Elijah's attention? Why or why not?

Has God ever used the repetitive nature of life or circumstance to get your attention? Explain.

Read Acts 17:11. Why is it so important to hold Scripture as our foundation and standard for everything we think we may be hearing from God?

What do each of the following passages reveal about how the Bible helps us?

Psalm 119:9

Hebrews 4:12

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2 Timothy 3:16

Describe a time when you felt God used a passage from the Bible to speak into a situation in your life? What circumstances led to this? What eventually brought you to the reality that God speaks to us through His Word?

Describe a time in life when you know that God heard and answered your prayer.

In the space below, write a personal prayer to God inviting Him to speak to you, reveal Himself in new ways to you, and draw you closer to Himself.

“The sacred echo reminds me he has not departed, he is steadfast, and he has not given up on me.”
—*The Sacred Echo*, pg 25

deeper walk

Option: Select at least one activity below to complete during the next week.

—Begin praying for God to speak to you. Ask God to reveal Himself to you like He never has before. Ask Him to give you ears to hear and eyes to see the ways He is speaking to you. Be intentional about spending time in the Word this week.

—Write Isaiah 40:8 on an index card and memorize it. Each day this week, pray that God confirms the truth of this verse in your own life.

—Reflect on the ways in which you have heard from God in the past. Is there a certain pattern in your life or study that helps you connect with God best? If so, consider revisiting those disciplines.

Prayer + MTV

Truthfully, everybody prays. Because when life comes crashing down around us ... even unbelievers will throw out a “Help Me” prayer.

You and your small group have an incredible opportunity to minister to unbelievers from your own living room.

There’s an incredible ministry called NeedHim that is airing thought-provoking commercials on TV networks like MTV. As a result, tens of thousands of viewers have already responded by phone to learn more about God.

Bluefish TV has partnered with NeedHim to help find volunteers who are willing to answer phone calls or emails from those people looking to learn more about God. As a NeedHim volunteer, you can work out of your home with a phone line and internet connection.

To discover how you and your church can join us right now to make a difference – check out www.rightnow.org



interact

Share what you're learning through this Bible study online through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, using the hashtag #SacredEcho. Snap a photo of your small group and email it to info@margaretfeinberg.com.

taking it with you

Read *exposed*, and chapters 1 & 2 of *The Sacred Echo* book and work through the *Getting Ahead* section of Session Two before the next gathering.