NUDGES 5

Nudges in the right direction



UNDERSTANDING GOD'S VOICE

Love

Wim Kamphorst

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Foreword

My father was a man of few words. Big conversations about feelings or faith were not his way. Still, I never doubted his love. He showed it by helping, by stopping by briefly to see how things were going. Five minutes with a cup of coffee was enough. No long speech, just being there.

Only later did I see how much those short moments said. Love is not only something you say. It is something you do. That is also the common thread of this booklet.

> *"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."*
> 1 John 3:18

Why a booklet about love in a series about understanding God's voice? Because I have discovered that God's voice always serves love. He does not speak to fill us with knowledge, but to teach us to love. These nudges are small pushes in that direction: receiving God's love, and passing that love on.

Wim Kamphorst, founder of (F)Luister Nederland

Introduction

A few years ago I had a vision. No fire and lightning, but a whisper of love. It touched me deeply. That love was not only beautiful, it was also confronting. That is how much I needed God's love, more than I dared to admit myself.

That vision was not an endpoint, but a starting signal. It opened a period of years in which God taught me. He gave Bible verses new color. He demolished my old theology. He showed Himself, not as I knew Him, but as He truly is.

> *"We love him, because he first loved us."*
> 1 John 4:19

This is the foundation: love does not begin with us. We can only love once we ourselves have been loved. That is why this booklet begins with receiving and only then moves on to giving.

A closer look:
For God's love the New Testament often uses the Greek word agape. That is a love that does not depend on what the other person deserves. It chooses the other, even when it costs something. This is how God has loved us, and this is how He teaches us to love.

Chapter 1 Being loved

Many Christians know that God is love. They can recite it, they sing about it. But somewhere deep inside they do not quite believe it. They think God looks at them a little disappointed, that they first have to get better. I thought that way for a long time too.

Noise on the line

In the booklet Understanding God's Voice I wrote about noise on the line. If you believe that God dislikes you or is always angry, it is hard to recognize His voice of love. Then mostly you hear condemnation. And condemnation does not fit Jesus. He has justified us with His blood, and the Holy Spirit is our Comforter.

That is why I use this as a simple test: does what I hear fit the character of Jesus? Would He say this? If the tone is condemning, angry or proud, it does not come from Him. You can safely flush such a thought down the toilet.

God's father heart

Not everyone had a father who looked out for him. Some fathers said little, others were absent or caused pain. That colors how you look at God. But God is a Father who does look out for you. In Luke 15 the father runs to meet his son, even before he can explain anything.

> *"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him."*
> Psalm 103:13

Love is the measure

The church in Corinth was rich in gifts. They spoke in tongues, they prophesied, they had knowledge. And yet Paul wrote to them, in the middle of his teaching on the gifts: even if I had the gift of prophecy and knew all

mysteries and possessed all knowledge, but did not have love, I would be nothing.

Not a little less. Nothing. That makes love a test for everything we think we hear. The question is not first: how much do I hear from God? The question is: does it make me more loving? Words that puff up, that set you above others or sow division, lack God's signature, however spiritual they may sound. God's voice serves love, or it is not His voice.

> *"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."*
> 1 Corinthians 13:4

Chapter 2 Love that does something

Jesus saw people. When He saw a crowd, He was moved with compassion deep within. That compassion set Him in motion: He healed, He taught, He gave food. With Jesus, love was never only a feeling. It always became an act.

> *"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."*
> Matthew 9:36

Compassion as the voice of the Spirit

Compassion is often a language of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps you recognize it: you are walking down the street and feel deep compassion for someone you do not know. Or you strongly feel the need to let someone know that God loves him or her. Those are impressions to take seriously. They often come faster than you think, and they also pass quickly.

I have a habit when I watch the news. I do not want to be overwhelmed by all the misery, so with each broadcast I pick one person to pray for. Afterwards I think about whether I can encourage or help that person with the love of God. Once I saw a woman who, despite working hard, could not let her daughter go to school. It touched me deeply. I prayed for her and looked for contact. After a few weeks it worked out to transfer money through someone who knew her situation. Love that shows itself in deeds.

A card and a cup of coffee

Love does not have to be big. When I worked as a cook, a colleague was leaving. I wrote a farewell card with three sentences, words that I believed came from God. He was still laughing with the others as he took the card. Then he read it and burst into tears. Heaven touched earth through a card.

From my father I learned that small things can be big. A cup of coffee. A question about how you are doing. Dropping by for a moment. That is love that does something.

Loving when it is hard

Love is only truly tested when the other person does not make it easy for you. I once had a colleague who was fiercely opposed to the Christian faith. You could not mention church or Jesus without anger coming back. I started praying for him and waited for a moment when I could do something in the name of Jesus. On his birthday I gave him a gift that was expensive for me. He softened. From that moment we could talk about Jesus and the Bible.

As a baker I worked for a boss who liked to tease me. He put a heavy pack of meat on top of a board and asked me to take a tray from underneath it. You can guess where those kilos of meat ended up: in my face. Everyone laughed. At a moment like that a gift of the Spirit helps little, but the fruit of the Spirit all the more. Can I stay out of bitterness? Can I keep offense outside the door of my heart? In that period I saw little result, except that I learned to keep my heart pure.

> *"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."*
> Matthew 5:44

Love does not choose one side either. In the conflict between Ukraine and Russia we often take sides instinctively. But Jesus came to save both Ukrainians and Russians. That is why we help on both sides, so that the gospel can spread. Our struggle is not against people.

Chapter 3 How do you grow in love?

Love grows, like all fruit of the Spirit. You do not have to be able to do it all at once. A few nudges:

1. **Let yourself be loved first**

   Take time to receive God's love before you start giving it. Slowly read 1 John 4 or Luke 15 and ask: "Father, how do You look at me?" Write down what you hear. If it sounds condemning, test it against Jesus. If it sounds like Him, keep it.

2. **Look for one person every day**

   In the morning ask: "Lord, whom may I love today?" Pay attention to who stands out to you, for whom you feel compassion. Pray for that person and ask whether there is something you can do. In the news, at work, in the supermarket.

3. **Make it small and concrete**

   A card with three sentences. A cup of coffee. A text message: "I was thinking of you." Love is often found in small things that come at the right moment. Ask God for a word of encouragement and write it on a card.

4. **Choose to bless when it chafes**

   Think of someone you are struggling with. This week, pray for that person every day, and bless him or her out loud. Notice what changes in your own heart. Bitterness gets less room when you bless.

5. **Test what you hear against love**

   When you think you understand something from God, do not only ask: is it right? Also ask: does this make me more loving, and does it build up the other person? Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

Love is not a theory. It is the way God looks at you, and the way He wants to look at others through you.

FAQ

Question: I feel little of God's love. Is there something wrong with me?
Answer: No. Feeling is not the only measure. I too needed the vision of love to notice how little I had actually received. Read what God says about His love, ask Him whether He will let you experience it, and let people pray for you. Receiving love is sometimes also a process of healing.

Question: Do I have to love someone who has hurt me?
Answer: Jesus asks us to love and bless our enemies. That does not mean you have to approve of everything or make yourself unsafe. Loving can also mean setting boundaries while continuing to pray and bless. In heavy situations, seek help from people you trust.

Question: How do I know whether an impression to help someone comes from God?
Answer: Compassion and the need to let someone know that God loves him are often impressions of the Spirit. Test it against the Bible and against the character of Jesus. If it concerns something big, such as a substantial sum of money, first discuss it with someone you trust. Small acts of love you can usually just do.

At whispermagazine.org you can read true stories of people who heard God speak, learn more about hearing His voice and read our free Whisper magazine.

About (F)Luister Nederland

(F)Luister Nederland is a movement that wants to help believers understand the voice of God and grow in it. We believe that God still speaks today and that His children can learn to recognize, understand and obey His voice.

Our mission

We want to equip and encourage people to walk in relationship with Jesus in their daily lives, led by the Holy Spirit. It is our desire that more and more followers of Jesus learn to listen to His whisper and take bold steps in response.

Our vision

We see a church and a society in which God's voice is central once again. Where believers do not only listen to sermons or opinions, but live out of an intimate relationship with their Father in heaven. A generation that understands God's voice and, as a result, makes a difference in their surroundings.

Together we learn to understand His voice

There is more

This booklet is a nudge in the right direction. Do you want to go further? Whisper has more to help you on your way.

Whisper magazine
Our free magazine, to read online. **whispermagazine.org/magazine.html**

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How do you hear God? **whispermagazine.org/listening-profile.html**

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Love

Listening to Him. Loving with deeds.

God speaks. Every day. Not only to prophets or spiritual leaders, but to each one of us. The problem is not that He is silent, but that we often do not tune in properly.

In this book, Wim Kamphorst takes you on a journey to learn to recognize, understand and obey the voice of God. You will discover:

- how you learn to receive God's love, even if your father said little;
- why love is the measure for everything you think you hear;
- five nudges to grow in love that does something.

Wim Kamphorst learned from his father that love lies in a cup of coffee and five minutes of time. As a cook, as a baker and in a car-cleaning business he discovered that God's love speaks most strongly when it chafes.

With personal testimonies, clear Bible passages and practical examples, this book makes clear that loving with deeds is something that is close to God's heart.

God speaks.
Whom may you love today?

