

Dear Reader,

We hope you enjoyed this timely novel by Francine Rivers about relationships, the church, and God's call on people's lives. As always, Francine's desire is for you, the reader, to get into God's Word and discover His life-changing truths for yourself. We hope the following questions will help you to do that.

The shofar is a trumpet. It is usually a ram's horn. In the Old Testament Joshua, Gideon, and Joab, to name a few, used the shofar to lead the children of Israel. It was used to announce, to alert or warn of danger, to call to battle, or to call to action. It is still used in Judaism to call the people to accountability on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). We read in Zechariah 9:14 that the Lord Himself will blow the shofar to call His people. In the New Testament, we read that angels will use the trumpet to announce the warnings for the "end times" and ultimately, Christ's return.

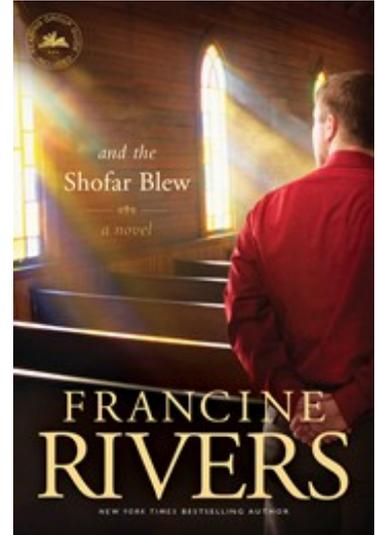
Today, the Holy Spirit and God's Word, the Bible, call out to us in much the same way as the shofar: God's voice warns us, alerts us to danger, calls us to action or to times of rest, and most important, calls us to accountability. In *And the Shofar Blew*, we read about different ways people think they are hearing God's voice—sometimes authentic, sometimes counterfeit—as well as different responses to Him. Sometimes He speaks in a "still, small voice"; other times, in a resounding blast. The questions begging to be asked are: Are we listening? Are we attentive to God's voice? How will we respond?

May God bless you as you seek Him for the answers. For surely, the shofar will blow!

Peggy Lynch

Hearing God's Voice

1. Choose two of the characters from the story and compare or contrast the ways in which they heard God's voice.
2. Discuss a counterfeit call from the story—a time someone believed he was hearing God's voice but was mistaken. How did the person respond? What were the results?
3. First John 4:1 says, "Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world." What do you learn from this passage, and how might you apply it to the story?
4. God often speaks to us through His Word, the Bible, or through the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Share such a time from your own experience. How did you hear God's voice? What were the circumstances? What was your response or actions, and what were the results?



5. Romans 8:28-29 says, “And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his son.” For what purpose does God call us? How does He choose to work this out?

6. Examine your heart, mind and life. What evidence do you see that God is speaking to you?

Building God’s Church

1. Discuss the different views of church building held by Paul’s father, Paul, and Stephen.

2. How did Paul’s view change? What prompted the changes? What actions confirmed the change? In what ways did Stephen change?

3. How do you develop relationships? How do you view church growth?

4. Psalm 127:1 says, “Unless the Lord builds a house, the work of the builders is useless.” What does this verse imply about building—both relationships and churches?

5. Acts 2:41-47 says, “Those who believed . . . were baptized and added to the church—about three thousand in all. . . . And each day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.” According to this passage, how did the early church grow numerically? What were the requirements?

6. First Corinthians 12:4-7, 27 says, “Now there are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but it is the same Holy Spirit who is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service in the church . . . there are different ways God works in our lives, but it is the same God who does the work through all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church. . . . Now all of you together are Christ’s body, and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it.” For what purpose are spiritual gifts given? What role are you and your gifts to play in the church, the body of Christ?

Additional reading: Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians 12–13, and James

