

FRAMES

B.E.L.L.S 'LISTEN'
PASTOR AMY SWANSON



Foundation Verse

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."



FRAME Questions:

1. **What does it mean to Listen?**
2. **And How Do We Hear the Holy Spirit?**

OPENING IMAGE

Our ears are an important aspect of our experience of community and connection. Hearing holds significant emotional and cultural importance for all humans. The sound of a loved one's voice or the laughter of friends can evoke deep emotional connections and a sense of belonging. The development of the auditory system begins early in fetal development, and by around the fifth month of pregnancy, a baby's ears are developed enough to perceive sounds from the outside world and establish a sense of connection to one's culture and family. Interesting fact...Just like fingerprints, each person's ears have a unique shape and pattern. This uniqueness has even led to the development of "earprint" identification as a form of biometric authentication.

"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply." -- Stephen R. Covey—*Habits of Highly Effective People*



What does it mean to Listen?

In his book 'Surprise the World' Michael Frost suggests that for many people, listening to the Holy Spirit is like trying to hear the radio in a busy coffee shop. You can make out the announcer's voice, but you have to strain over the hubbub of the other patrons to make out what the voice on the radio is saying. It's the same when we listen to the Holy Spirit... we have to turn down all the surrounding noise, so we can hear his Whisper. I'm sure sometimes the Holy Spirit interrupts us with a loud thought or a startling and jolting impression. But that doesn't happen very often.



How Can We Hear the Holy Spirit?

Read Acts Chapter 10

Question #1

Think about and talk with your friend about a time in your life when you clearly heard or sensed or experienced the Holy Spirit directing you. Share what that moment was like for you? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?



FRAMES FRAMES FRAMES



We Must Quiet Our Heart with Solitude and Prayer

Cornelius took time (as was his regular practice) to fast and pray; Peter took time alone on his rooftop to pray and listen to God...Out of these periods of solitude and prayerfulness both men positioned themselves to hear the voice of the Lord.

In *Satisfy Your Soul*, Bruce Demarest writes, "A quieted heart is our best preparation for all this work of God."

Jeremiah 33:3. "Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known."

God promises to speak to us, but we need to stop and actually listen to what he is saying.

Our practice of blessing and eating with others must be nurtured and sustained by the discipline of solitude, silence, and prayer so that we can learn to listen to God's voice for guidance and instruction.

CHALLENGE

Your mission this week should you choose to accept it.

Spend at least one period of time during the week listening for the Spirit's voice. May I suggest at least 20 minutes?

Question #2

Brainstorm with your friend some ways you might begin to discipline yourself to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit in your daily life.

Here are a few more tips...

1. Set aside a designated time (Jesus regularly went away to pray)
2. Eliminate distractions. (Matthew 6:6)
3. Let God In. Sit quietly and abide.
4. You will feel distracted In listening prayer, you just let your thoughts happen but don't engage them.
5. Don't rush. The longer you listen, the more your thoughts will slow down and become shaped by the Holy Spirit.
7. Practice and practice.

Some Further Resources

The Pause App from the App store to help you practice daily centering prayer activities.

<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/> for some practical help.

Resource:

Surprise the World, 5 Habits of Missional People by Michael Frost

