

# pray first

the transformative power of a life built on prayer

## Learning to Listen | PRAY FIRST

### Passage 1 Samuel 3:1-10

Beast or Obese? Judah: Dad, how do you hear God speak to you?

**“How do we hear the voice of God?”**→Busy, distracted, motivated by our own selfish ambition...NFL...

→If we want to hear the voice of God, we must learn to listen! Fortunately, spiritual listening skills can be developed! Samuel was in the Presence of God when he first heard Him speak. Like so many of us, he had to learn that it was God who was speaking. But listening, as difficult as it is, is actually easier than what may follow. What if God asks us to do something difficult? Are we ready to listen?

**1 Samuel 3: 1** *Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the Lord by assisting Eli. Now in those days **messages from the Lord were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon.** 2 One night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God. 4 Suddenly the Lord called out, “Samuel!”*

*“Yes?” Samuel replied. “What is it?” 5 He got up and ran to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?”*

*“I didn’t call you,” Eli replied. “Go back to bed.” So he did.*

*6 Then the Lord called out again, “Samuel!”*

*Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?”*

*“I didn’t call you, my son,” Eli said. “Go back to bed.”*

**7 Samuel did not yet know the Lord because he had never had a message from the Lord before.** 8 *So the Lord called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?”*

*Then Eli realized it was the Lord who was calling the boy. 9 So he said to Samuel, “Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went back to bed.*

*10 And the Lord came and called as before, “Samuel! Samuel!”*

*And Samuel replied, “**Speak, your servant is listening.**”*

**If we want to hear the voice of God, we must learn to listen.**→Samuel had some things going for him in his education.

- Samuel had a praying parent. He was in the Presence of God. He had a pastor. He persevered.
- He was persistent. “Eli?” “Eli?” “Eli?” “I’m listening.”

→If we want to know the voice of God, we must learn to listen. Samuel learned...and so can we.

**How can we develop spiritual listening skills?**→...“have to” to “get to...”→the privilege of prayer→TREASURE!

- DATE NIGHT→“I have to go on a date night tonight with Tara...”
- Treasure your time learning to listen:
  1. God’s Word.→Shaped?→We know God’s voice through what he has already said.→Jesus is the Word of God.
  2. Creation.→Enough time outside?→Tunnel View→AWE!
  3. Silence / Solitude.→Integrate in your day→5 minutes here/there→Susanna Wesley
  4. Spiritual mentorship.→Small group leader, elder, pastor, DT coach, a Christian you respect...
  5. Journal (reflective prayer)→Jennifer Webster→Writing things down/reflecting...
  6. Fast→Tune out the distractions direct your focus to God.→Food takes up time...
  7. Attend church consistently.→Listen to God speaking through people...
  8. TIP: “God what are you trying to say to me right now?”
  9. PERSEVERE: Don’t give up! Silent season...does God trust us?→Or is there a different reason: NEXT WEEK!

→We will never be able to learn to listen...unless we TREASURE our time learning to do it.

**What good is listening if we don't...OBEY?**→Obedience brings peace, joy, & hope bc it makes us more like Jesus!

- Samuel: "Speak, for your servant is listening."→God asked Samuel to do something very difficult.→Complicated!
- Obedience brings peace, NOT because it makes our lives less complicated, but because it makes us more like Christ.→Harper / VBS offering→VISION: Can we be a church that brings JOY to the Father's heart?
- Listening without obedience results in a callous over our hearts...& eventual hard hearts. NO peace, joy, & hope!

→ God wants us to listen/obey...because He knows becoming more like Jesus will bring a full of life life.

→**Learning to listen to God is a treasure we can all unlock!**→Prayer: Lord, help us to listen & obey.

**TALK ABOUT IT - Questions to GROW through with family, friends, & myself.**

1. Would my friends colleagues consider me a good listener? What skills do good listeners have?
2. Do I have someone for spiritual guidance? How can they help me discern the voice of God?
3. How can I develop my spiritual listening skills to hear God's voice more clearly?
4. If God spoke to me, would I be ready to listen and obey like Samuel did? Why/why not?
5. **PRAYER:** "Father, help me to listen for your voice and obey your words."

## QUOTES / SONGS:

- *"Prayer is simply a two way conversation between you and God."* - Billy Graham
- *"God speaks to those who take time to listen, and He listens to those who take time to pray."* - Unknown
- *"God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer."* - Mother Theresa

## ARTICLES / BOOKS:

- **Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God:** By Dallas Willard
- **Chat with God: Prayer Journey:** By Jennifer Webster
- **"The Praying Example of Susanna Wesley":** [Web article CLICK here.](#)

## SCRIPTURES: New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.

- **John 10** - 3 *The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. 5 They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice.*
- **1 Kings 19** - 12 *And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And a voice said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"*
- **Romans 2** - 12 *When the Gentiles sin, they will be destroyed, even though they never had God's written law. And the Jews, who do have God's law, will be judged by that law when they fail to obey it. 13 For merely listening to the law doesn't make us right with God. It is obeying the law that makes us right in his sight. 14 Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. 15 They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. 16 And this is the message I proclaim—that the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone's secret life.*
- **Acts 2:17-18** - 17 *'In the last days,' God says,*  
    *'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.*  
    *Your sons and daughters will prophesy.*  
    *Your young men will see visions,*  
    *and your old men will dream dreams.*  
18 *In those days I will pour out my Spirit*  
    *even on my servants—men and women alike—*  
    *and they will prophesy.*

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