

WEEK FOUR | LISTENING PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

What was your biggest takeaway from a month focused on prayer?

Has this series changed the way you think about prayer in anyway?

If so, how?

Jesus shows us that prayer is all about our relationship and life with the Father. We learn how to relate to the Father in different ways and through different types of prayer. With listening prayer we ask the question: "What is it like to actually hear from God?" We will explore what it is like to hear from the Spirit. In this Practice we allow the Holy Spirit access to our imaginations, which were created and given by God.

START WITH SCRIPTURE

READ JOHN 10:1-21

OBSERVATIONS

1) In the Gospel of John Jesus uses several "I am" statements to communicate truth about himself. What "I am" statements are used in John 10?

2) What do these I AM statements teach us about Jesus?

3) Read verses 6 & 20-21. What is going on here and why is it important? What can you learn?

4) What did you learn about hearing the voice of God in the passage and Sunday's teaching?

PRACTICING THE PRACTICES

Listening Prayer Practice. (Consider doing this in smaller groups or gender-specific groups. (The following is a suggested practice borrowed from *Practicing the Way*)

**Take Your Time With This*

- 1) Start by asking Jesus to silence all other voices in the room, so that you can only hear the voice of the Father. Specifically, ask Jesus to silence the voice of our enemy. Also, ask Jesus to quiet any of the distracting thoughts in your mind.
 - 2) Begin with forgiveness. Ask the Father to bring to mind anything you don't feel forgiven for. If there is anything, imagine taking it to the cross and leaving it there. Then ask the Father if there is anyone you need to forgive. If there is, imagine releasing this person and any offenses.
 - 3) Invite God to bring to mind what he wants to address. Perhaps explore some of these prompts:
 - Is there anything I believe about myself that is not true? What does the Father want to replace it with?
 - Ask the Father if there are any other things that he want to speak to you about.
 - 4) When the Father brings something to mind, ask some follow up questions:
 - What do you want me to know about this?
 - Is there anything else? (Don't be afraid to wait longer and just enjoy the time of stillness in the presence of the Father.)
 - 5) Here are a couple common frustrations when doing listening prayer:
 - What if you ask God to speak and there is nothing or you see just blackness in your mind's eye? If this is the case then ask the Father, "What do you want me to know about this?" Perhaps the blackness is an invitation into peace or rest. Press in and wait in his presence.
 - What if it's really hard to focus? Ask the Father, "What do you want me to know about this?" And remember that this is a Practice, it can take some time.
 - If you are not hearing anything, ask the Father if there is a Scripture that He wants to bring to mind.
- Remember that, overall, this is a time to be deepening your relationship with the Father. Maybe this is just a time to relax with the God and receive his love.

Have someone pray to thank God for speaking.