

## After God's Own Heart

### Discerning God's Voice

1 Samuel 3:1-21

Today, we will look at a passage that illustrates our second element of being After God's Own Heart which is **Discerning God's Voice**. This is a universal desire, but struggle!

**How can we be in a room full of noise but understand every word from our child from across the room...we FOCUS on them**

*"The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."* **John 6:63**

*"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."* **John 10:27**

**Distraction from focus can lead to difficulty discerning.**

**Main Idea:** People After God's Own Heart Discern the Voice of God

*"Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, 'Here I am!' and ran to Eli and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call; lie down again.' So he went and lay down. And the LORD called again, 'Samuel!' and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.' Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant hears.' Then the LORD said to Samuel, 'Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.' Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said, 'Samuel, my son.' And he said, 'Here I am.' And Eli said, 'What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.' So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, 'It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him.' Samuel grew. The Lord was with him, and he fulfilled everything Samuel prophesied. All Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a confirmed prophet of the Lord. The Lord continued to appear in Shiloh, because there he revealed himself to Samuel by his word." **1 Samuel 3:1-21***

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### I. Discerning God's Voice from the Right Position – 1 Samuel 3:1-3

*"For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess."* **Deuteronomy 32:47**

*"These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you."* **Psalms 50:21**

We hear from God best when we position ourselves for it! Worshipping with the church, growing in community with believers, prioritizing quiet time with the Lord, taking retreat/fast from tech position us to hear from God. When did you last?

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### II. Discerning God's Voice with the Right People – 1 Samuel 3:4-9

Eli was far from perfect, but he genuinely desired that Samuel would hear the voice of God. This is instructive for us as we seek to hear from God, ourselves.

*"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."* **Colossians 3:16**

To hear the voice of God, not only must we BE WITH the Right People...we must BE the Right People helping others hear the voice of God!

We want to be people after God's on Heart, right? Look around! Are you hanging out with the right people? Yes, please have friendships outside the church and with people who don't know Jesus, but your BEST FRIENDS and those closest to you need to be those who will help you hear the voice of God, & you reciprocate.

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### III. Discerning God's Voice in the Right Prayer – 1 Samuel 3:10

*"And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant hears.'" **1 Samuel 3:10***

*"The primary organ for receiving God's revelation is not the eye that sees but the ear that hears – which means that all of our reading of Scripture must develop into a hearing of the word of God."* **Eugene Peterson**

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### IV. Discerning God's Voice for the Right Purpose – 1 Samuel 3:11-21

Once Samuel heard the voice of God, he might have *wanted* to take his "yes" back off the table. His first act as a prophet would be one of his hardest. He would decide right then (at 12) whether he would honor God or please people. Not easy!

*"And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli... Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him... Samuel grew. The Lord was with him, and he fulfilled everything*

*Samuel prophesied. All Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a confirmed prophet of the Lord. The Lord continued to appear in Shiloh, because there he revealed himself to Samuel by his word.” 1 Samuel 3:15b, 18a, 19-21*

*“I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him...And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?’ – when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.” Deuteronomy 18:18, 21-22*

#### **Practically, What to Know about Discerning the Voice of God**

- God Still Speaks through His Voice (Holy Spirit), His Word (Scriptures), His People (Church), His World (Creation), and His Son (Jesus).
- Barriers to Discerning God’s Voice are Inexperience, Expectation, Sin, and Unwillingness to Obey.

*“In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.” Psalm 40:6*

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So much has changed since 1 Samuel 3 (3,000+ years ago), but one thing has not. God desires to communicate with his people & he’s looking to do it!

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

**Christ:** The same language used to describe young Samuel, would later be used to describe the boy Jesus (1 Samuel 2:27 & Luke 2:52). In addition, Samuel served as a priest and a prophet, but Jesus was the true Prophet, Priest, and King. We do not try to emulate or follow Samuel, but we surrender to the Lordship of Jesus our Savior!

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:1-2, 14*

#### **Sources and Further Reading Opportunities**

- **CSB Study Bible** – Trevin Wax, Ed. (2017)
- **Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel** – J.D. Greear & Heath Thomas (2016)
- **Wiersbe Expository Outlines on the OT** – Warren Wiersbe (1993)
- **New American Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel** – Robert D. Bergen (1996)