
A Better Home for Christmas · Week 1
A Home That Is Better at Listening
Sunday, November 15, 2026 | Message by Ron Milne
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The Central Truth

A better home begins with ears open to God and to one another.



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"They are in the same house at the same time, but they are not together." — Dr. Gary Chapman

46% of teens say their parent is distracted by a phone when trying to talk.

31% of parents recognize this in themselves.
(2024 Pew Research Center)

We think we are listening.
Our kids are telling us we are not.

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"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

— Deuteronomy 6:4–9

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1. Listening to the Lord

"Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain." — Psalm 127:1

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Hear Who God Is:

A better home is built on a Person, not a parenting technique.

Hear With Your Whole Heart:

Shema means to hear and heed—listening that inherently leads to obedience.

The Home Follows:

The loudest voice in your home sets its direction.

"Just as love to God begins with listening to His Word, so the beginning of love for the brethren is learning to listen to them." — Dietrich Bonhoeffer

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Teaching the Next Generation to Hear

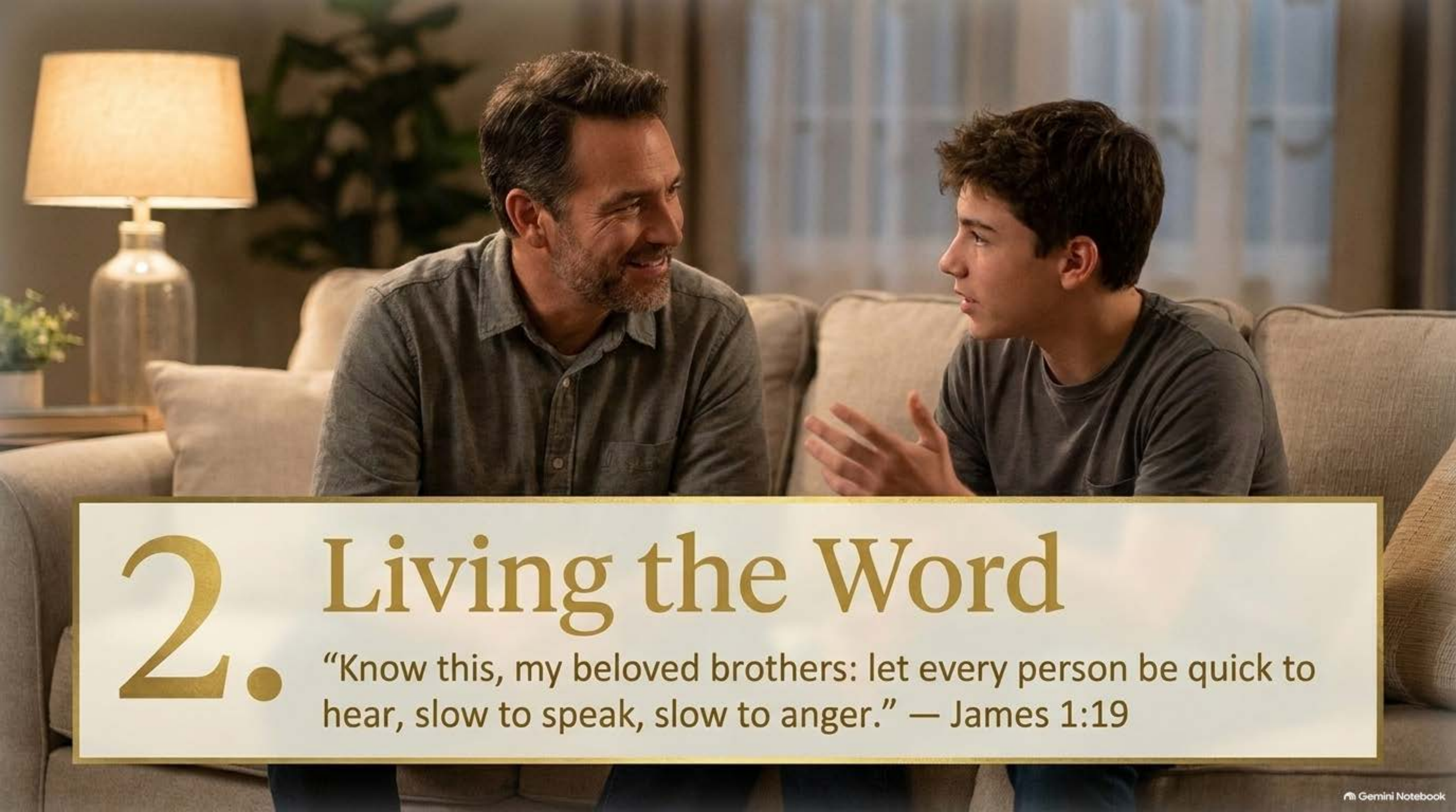
Samuel didn't recognize God's voice by accident. An older believer pointed him to the Lord.

"Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.'" — 1 Samuel 3:9



The great calling of a home: Help the people in it recognize when God is speaking.

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2. Living the Word

“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.” — James 1:19

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What the Greek New Testament Teaches Us About Listening



AKOUŌ (To Hear):
Everyday hearing. Attention that responds.
“He who has ears… let him hear.”



HYPAKOUŌ (To Obey):
Listening that bows. To place yourself beneath what you hear.



PARAKOUŌ (To Refuse):
Hearing goes sideways. Sound reaches the ear, but the heart turns aside.



AKROATĒS (The Hearer):
The audience member. Sits through the sermon or the conversation without ever changing.

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The Science of James 1:19

The Daily Bid	The Result
In strong marriages, partners turn toward small bids for attention 86% of the time. In marriages that end in divorce, it is only 33%. (Dr. John Gottman)	Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable. (David Augsburger)



Quick ears, slow tongue: Turn your body. Make eye contact. Phone face down. Ask: “Tell me more.”

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3.

Lessons at the Table

“You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them…”
— Deuteronomy 6:7



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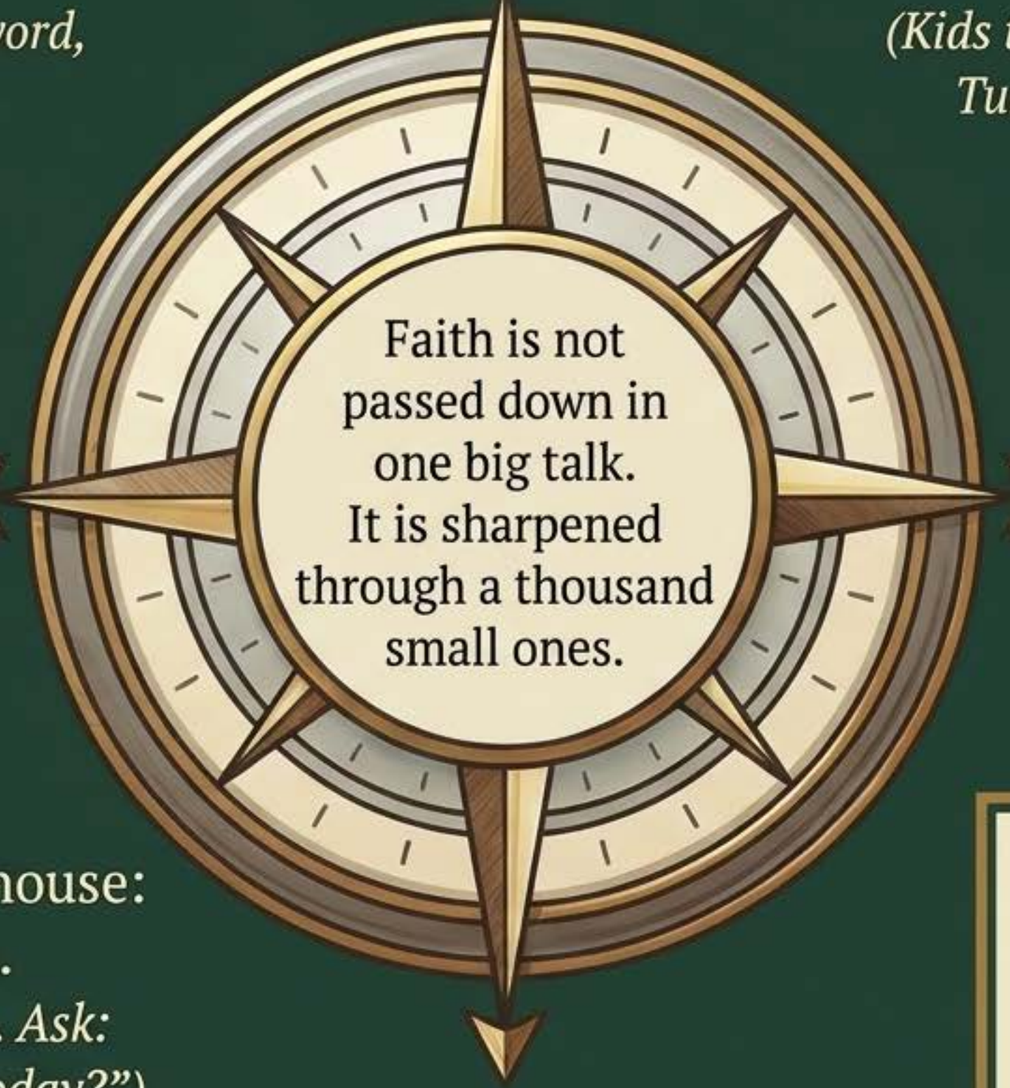
North

When you rise:
The first cup of coffee.
(Give God the first word, not the phone).

When you walk by the way:
The car ride.
(Kids talk more side-by-side. Turn the radio down).

When you lie down:
Bedtime.
(The late-night window at 10:45pm. Pray over them by name).

West



East

When you walk by the way:
The car ride.
(Kids talk more side-by-side. Turn the radio down).

When you sit in your house:
The dinner table.
(Put phones in a basket. Ask: "Where did you see God today?")

South

The #1 Predictor of a Spiritually Healthy Young Adult:
Regular Bible reading in the home while growing up.
(Lifeway Research)

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Building a Better Home This Week

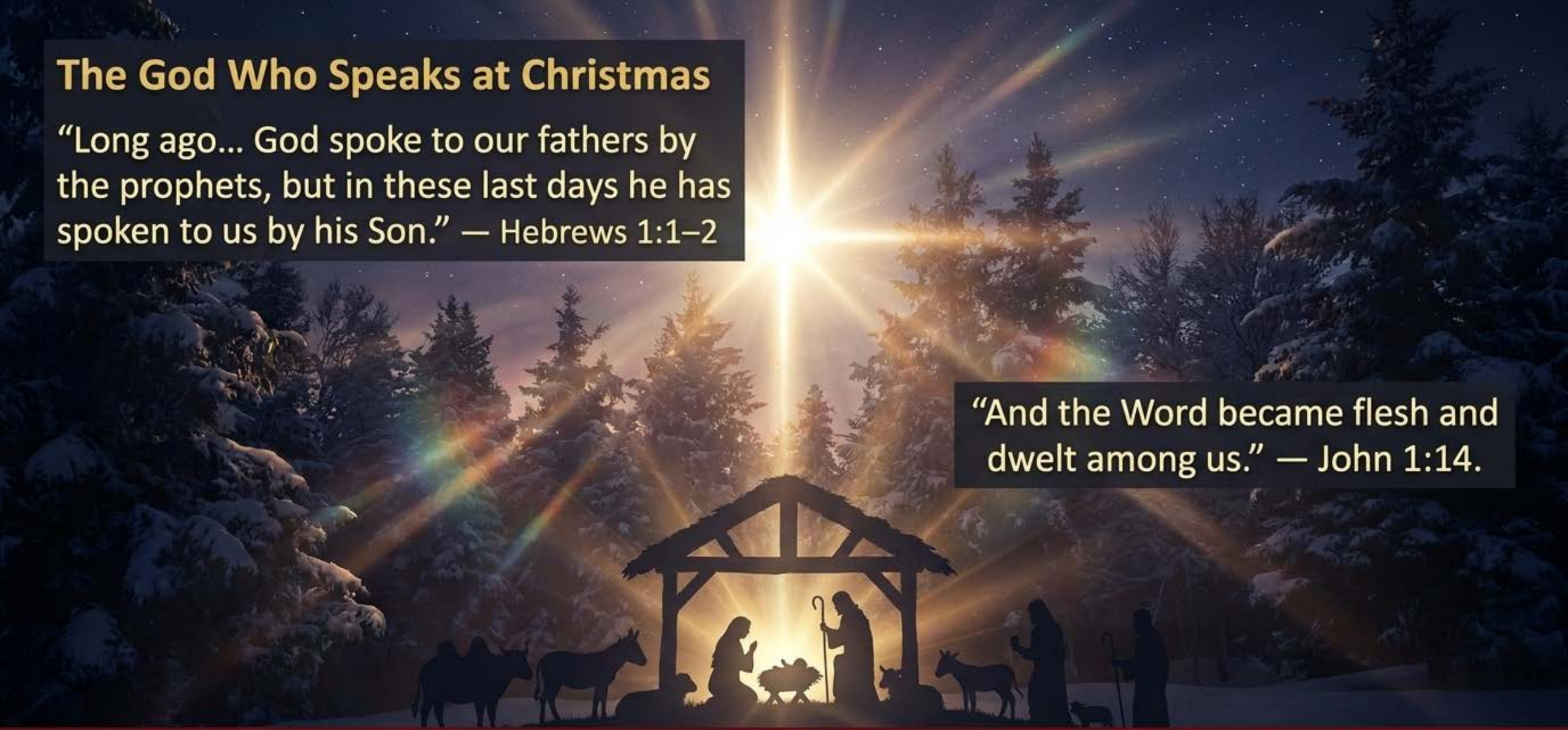
Upward & Inward

- **God first, phone second.**
  Charge your phone in the kitchen. Read one Psalm a day.
- **Listen on Sunday.**
  Take home one sentence from the sermon and share it at lunch.
- **Don’t fix it first.**
  Ask: “Do you want me to help solve this, or just hear it?”

Outward & Together

- **Table phone-free.**
  Drop phones in a basket before before meals (Parents go first).
- **Grandparents count.**
  A FaceTime Bible story is part of God’s plan.
- **Living alone?**
  Invite someone over. The table still matters.

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Christmas is God’s “Hear, O Israel” wrapped in swaddling cloths.
A better home begins with hearts that have heard Jesus and believed.

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A Prayer for Our Homes

Father, You have spoken to us by Your Son. Open our ears to hear Him.

Let Your Word live in our hearts, and make us quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger in our homes. Teach us to listen to husbands and wives, our children and grandchildren, our parents and neighbors the way You listen to us.

Build our houses, Lord, so we do not labor in vain. In Jesus' name, amen.



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