

WEEK 3 - TITLE: Listening

TEXT: 1 Samuel 3:10 Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

TAG: God's talking, are you listening?

Obedience to God is not as complicated as we tend to make it. In the end, we need to listen to God and do what He says.

If you could go back and give one piece of advice to your teenage self, what would you say? Why? How do you think your life would be different if you had known that? How do you think the teenage version of yourself would have responded?

Hindsight is 20/20. We've all made mistakes that, if we could, we would love to go back and make a different choice. Problem is that even if we could, most of our past selves wouldn't listen. We have trouble with that a lot of the time—simply listening to someone who knows what he or she is talking about and then acting accordingly. But as we will see in today's discussion, obedience to God might not be as complicated as we tend to make it. In the end, we need to listen to God and do what He says.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN

When you spend time with God, do you spend more time talking or listening? Why?

What things in our lives distract us from hearing the voice of God?

We live in a noisy culture. Whether it's the TV, our cell phones, music in the background, or even billboards on the side of the road, we are constantly being bombarded with voices. Most everyone of those voices is telling us to do something. If we want to listen to God and do what He says, we must first put ourselves in the right surroundings.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 SAMUEL 3:1-9.

Why do you think the Lord called to Samuel the boy instead of Eli the priest?

How did Samuel's surroundings help him hear from God?

If you decided to absolutely commit yourself to hearing from God on a daily basis, what distractions would you need to limit or eliminate?

What's keeping you from making some tough decisions like that about your schedule and habits?

The main reason we don't hear the voice of God is not because He's not speaking; it's because we're not listening. But putting ourselves in the right surroundings to listen isn't just about time and place; it's about our relationships. One of the reasons we do life together, investing in each other, is so that we can help each hear and recognize the voice of God. Once we hear the voice of God, that voice requires a response of surrender.

Who has been an Eli to you in your life—someone that has helped you hear the voice of God more clearly?

Are you investing your life right now to be an Eli for someone else? If not, why not?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 SAMUEL 3:10-11.

How does Samuel's response to the voice of God indicate his surrender to the will of God?

Is that how you typically respond to God's voice? Based on your actions, how does your typical response to God's voice sound?

If we want to listen to God and do what He says, we must put ourselves in the right surroundings. Then we must have an attitude of surrender. When we do, we will find success. But success might look different than it looks in the eyes of the world.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 SAMUEL 3:12-21.

Did God give Samuel an easy message to deliver? What, in your own words, did God tell Samuel to do? Given that message from God, how do you think we should define success? Is that hard for you? How would you usually define success?

Success is measured not in size but in obedience. Samuel delivered a tough message to his mentor. It probably didn't feel good at the time, but Samuel was successful because he listened to God and did what He said. When we put ourselves in the right surroundings, choose to surrender to what God says, then there's no doubt we will find success in the eyes of the Lord.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME

What's your next step today to make sure you are putting yourself in the right surroundings to hear the voice of God?

What's your next step of surrender today? Are there any practices you need to start? Is there anything from your life that you need to remove?

PRAY

Before you speak in prayer, spend at least a minute in silence just listening to the Lord. Pray that your group would put themselves in a position to continue to hear God's voice and then do what He says.