

# GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide

SB 04.18.2021

Hearing the Voice of God— 1 Samuel 3

## Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

It's interesting that this chapter which is all about hearing the voice of God begins with a statement about how rare the word of the Lord had become in the days of Eli. It begs the question, why had the word of the Lord become rare? Did God develop a terrible case of laryngitis or something? Did He run out of things to say? Of course not. It's not that God didn't have anything to say, it's just that people had stopped listening. Have you ever had that experience where you're talking to someone and at some point you realize that they have stopped listening to you? Let me ask that same question another way, ladies, have you ever tried to have a conversation with your husbands? When someone stops listening, what do we do? We usually stop talking. That's what happened in Israel. God hadn't run out of things to say. He was just waiting for someone who was listening. God longed to speak to His people back then and He still longs to speak to us today. You need to know that. His voice is healing. His voice is wisdom. His voice is joy. His voice is life. His voice is love. Learning to hear His voice is the solution to a thousand problems and the key to unlocking your destiny and the means to discovering His will for your life. Let's get into our study...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion:

1. What struck you or stood out to you from this week's sermon?
2. If you could go back and give one piece of advice to your teenage self, what would you say? Why?
3. How do you think your life would be different if you had known that?

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.

## Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

1. When you spend time with God, do you spend more time talking or listening? Why?
2. 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

1. Why do you think the Lord called to Samuel the boy instead of Eli the priest?
2. How did Samuel's surroundings help him hear from God?

## Visitation/Restoration in 2021

3. If you decided to absolutely commit yourself to hearing from God on a daily basis, what distractions would you need to limit or eliminate?
4. 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.

1. Who has been an Eli in your life—someone that has helped you hear the voice of God more clearly?
2. 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.

1. How does Samuel's response to the voice of God indicate his surrender to the will of God?
2. Is that how you typically respond to God's voice? Based on your actions, how does your typical response to God's voice sound?

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 SAMUEL 3:12-21. (Extra questions)

1. Did God give Samuel an easy message to deliver? What, in your own words, did God tell Samuel to do?
2. Given that message from God, how do you think we should define success?
3. 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.**

#### Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

**When we allow sin to go unchecked in our lives, it becomes harder and harder to hear the Lord's voice. When we don't heed the voice of the Lord, we start to become dull of hearing. This is why God's word tells us to, 'lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save our souls.' {James 1:21} The word translated filth in that verse is actually a medical term that means 'wax in the ear.' The word picture is powerful. James is telling us that a buildup of sin will impact our ability to hear in the spiritual realm in the same way that a buildup of wax affects our ability to hear in the physical realm. It's why over and over again the Scriptures say, 'Today if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts.'**

1. What's your next step today to make sure you are putting yourself in the right surroundings to hear the voice of God?
2. 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?

PRAYER - 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.

*"As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Heb. 3:15*