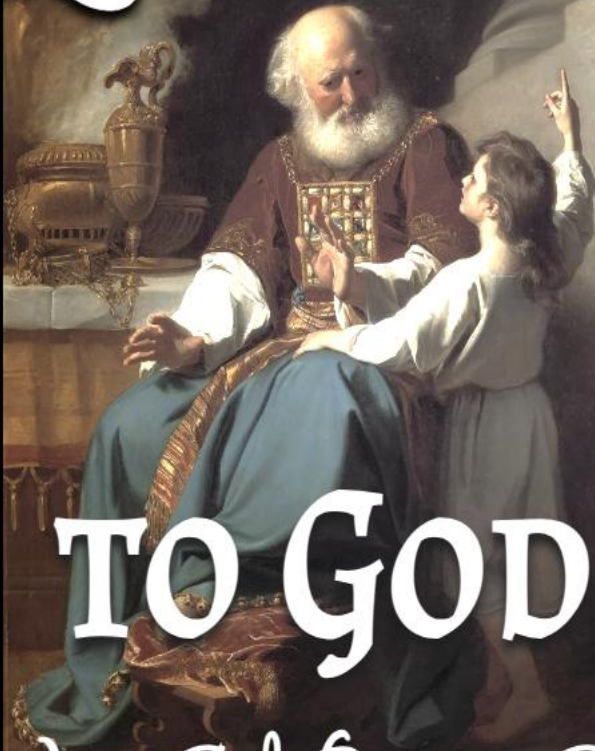


Listening



TO GOD

West End Baptist Church

Newport Tennessee

Pastor Tom Mootz

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PLEASE FEEL FREE TO:

Take as many copies as you need;

Pray over as many copies as you take;

Distribute as many copies as you pray over!

"LISTENING TO THE LORD"

One of the mothers in the Scripture that I did not use last week was named Hannah. She was childless and prayed that God would give her a son.

It wasn't necessary to do so (we don't "make deals" with God - "If You ***, I will ***"), but she had promised to give her son back to God if He would grant her very sincere and meaningful prayer; which He did (grant her prayer) - and which she did (give him back) as well.

She left her son (probably about three years old), Samuel, under the watch-care of the backslidden Priest, Eli and his two evil sons. That was not the best situation, to be sure; but, as they say, "a deal is a deal".

(1 Sam 3:1) - And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli until he was probably about twelve years old (according to the early

Jewish historian, Josephus). And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

This “ministering unto The Lord” involved some menial duties around the tabernacle (cleaning up residue from the sacrifices, attending to the needs of the worshippers, singing in the temple choir, serving as security guards, overseeing various areas of maintenance, placing the proper articles of worship in the proper places, overseeing the various fabrics and curtains, assisting the priests in various services; and keeping the lamps filled with oil).

(1 Sam 3:2) - And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see (“see well”);

(1 Sam 3:3) - And before the Lamp of God went out in the Temple Area of the LORD,

where the Ark of God was located, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;

The several menorahs were filled with oil enough to burn through the night; so Samuel's Call from God was apparently just before dawn. For obvious reasons, Samuel was not sleeping next to the Ark (in the Most Holy Place); but he was, in fact, either in or close by the main tent of the Tabernacle.

(1 Sam 3:4) - That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, "Here I am".

(1 Sam 3:5) - And he ran unto Eli, and said, "I am here for you called me". And Eli said, "I didn't call you; go back to sleep". And he went and lay down.

(1 Sam 3:6) - And The LORD called yet again, "Samuel". And Samuel got up the second time and said, "I am here for you called me". And

The Priest Eli answered, "No, I did not call you my son; lie back down and go to sleep".

(1 Sam 3:7) - Now Samuel did not yet know The LORD, neither was The Word of The LORD yet revealed unto him.

(1 Sam 3:8) - And the LORD called Samuel for the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, "I am here, sir; for you did call me. And Priest Eli perceived that The LORD was calling the child.

Even as backslidden as Eli was, he still had some Spiritual perceptions that could be used by The Lord.

(1 Sam 3:9) - Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, "Go, lie back down: and it shall be, if He calls you again, you answer Him: 'Speak, LORD; for your servant hears You'". So, Samuel went and lay down in his place.

(1 Sam 3:10) - And the LORD came, and stood, (that is new) and called as at other times, "Samuel, Samuel". Then Samuel answered, "Speak; for your servant is listening".

Very few questions in life are more important than, "What shall I do with my life?" In business, science, education, legal, beauty, sales, engineering, mechanical, transportation, military, communications, construction, service, agriculture, manufacturing - all worthy vocations; but there is also the call to the ministry - which includes several forms of various Christian services.

I. WHEN GOD SPEAKS; WE MUST HEAR HIM.

I don't know if God's Voice on this occasion was audible or not; but it certainly was audible enough to Samuel to awaken him from sleep.

There are times when God speaks in a general way to communicate to us through circumstances, thoughts, inclinations, abilities, and/or selected Scriptures; but this time, it was very direct and extremely personal!

And there's something else! There are many voices out there, each demanding that we hear them. Good voices, strong voices, noble voices calling us to an occupation, to financial dealings, to family arrangements, even to church. Sometimes, these voices add to our self-doubts and peer pressure; and sometimes, sadly, they can speak so loudly, they drown out God's Voice. So many voices. It becomes confusing.

If you know the background of this Scripture Passage; you will remember that these were really dark days:

(1 Sam 3:1) - And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the

LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

"The Word was precious" indicates that God's Word was rare in those days; and very rarely heard.

"No open vision" indicates that there was no recognized prophet whom the people could consult, and to whom they could go for advice.

Dark days or glorious days make no difference to God when He speaks. God will speak even when the day is dark. Even in days of "doom and gloom" and threats of "boom".

II. WHEN GOD SPEAKS, WE MUST UNDERSTAND HIM.

This is a very vital, extremely important area of this question.

When we think He only calls us to be a preacher, we severely limit God's ability. We need missionaries, teachers, encouragers, servers, givers, administrators, and pastors. In other words, all of the seven Spiritual Gifts are involved.

In addition, we need deacons, farmers, school teachers, homemakers, and skilled tradesmen and craftsmen of all types.

God calls us in basic alignment with our Spiritual Gifts and Natural talents. Though there are exceptions, God generally does not call medical doctors to be agricultural specialists; or skilled musicians to serve as cooks. God takes no delight in forcing square pegs into round holes.

Basically, God's Call comes in light of our potential. Maybe not at the time; but if the potential is there; skills can be acquired later. Samuel did not possess all the skills he would

need as Israel's Prophet at the time he was called; but he had the potential to acquire all he would need.

**THERE ARE SOME NORMAL AND A FEW
ABNORMAL THINGS THAT GO A LONG
WAY IN ASSISTING OUR UNDERSTAND-
ING.**

1. A Christian home. Samuel was from a Godly home; and knowing the Scriptures from childhood is certainly an asset in interpreting God's Voice.

2. Worship. We are more likely to hear and understand God's Voice if we place ourselves in the right places where His Voice can be heard more readily. Unfortunately, most of us give God the attention that a child gives when mom is talking over a blaring television and headphones of "Hootie and the Blowfish".

3. Wise counsel and advice. Eli was a trusted friend to whom Samuel could go.

Who is your "Eli"? Maybe a pastor, spouse, friend, teacher, neighbor, or parent?

Our understanding will grow through the years. Samuel misunderstood at first - he thought Eli was calling him. In the same way, the path to our understanding of this awesome process can take time to begin, develop, and mature.

III. WHEN GOD SPEAKS, WE MUST OBEY HIM.

Hearing and understanding are of no value unless you obey. The task might not be easy - Samuel's certainly was not. Sometimes, we draw back; think we are not capable; sell God short - but our faith in God has to increase.

Obedience can be a stretching, growing experience. God's Challenges are tough. His work is not always easy; but with His help, it can be done.

Obedience should be immediate. It is easier to just do it rather than wasting time trying to find all the excuses not to just do it!

When we respond, God is very quick to certify that fact to everyone who needs to be "in the loop":

(1Sam 3:19) - And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and let none of his words fall (uselessly) to the ground.

(1 Sam 3:20) - And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew clearly that Samuel was established ("accredited and approved") to be a prophet of the LORD.

Samuel's reputation as "God's Man" was "Israeli-wide" and his counsel was sought from all parts of the nation.

(1 Sam 3:21) - And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh (after long periods of non-appearances): for The LORD revealed Himself to Samuel (after long periods of non-revelations) in Shiloh by The Word of The LORD.

Samuel was God's Spokesman and that was clear to all! They might not obey; but no one ever doubted that it was God who was speaking through Samuel. Samuel had God's stamp of approval; he had God's Power to do what needed doing.

Samuel's obedient response brought a new prophetic era to Israel. With the calling of this boy, the entire nation reached a turning point; the Dark Ages of this era of History enlightened.

Your obedience can be a turning point. It might affect the nation or it might not cause even a ripple on the local pond of life; but it WILL affect you, maybe your family, maybe your church, maybe your neighborhood, maybe your community! And isn't that what it's all about?

Now, how can we know that it is indeed God Who is calling?

Lori Hatcher has written about this:

This involves both internal and external signs, seeking confirmation through prayer and Scripture, and discerning God's Will in and for your life. In fact, it is a process of discernment, requiring both listening to God's Guidance and taking action and following where He leads.

INTERNAL SIGNS:

1. Having a strong attraction or desire; a

profound yearning to live more authentically for and intimately with God.

2. Having a deep desire to pray and therefore, communicate with God.

3. Having a sense of urgency that mere earthly existence is not enough and a longing for more.

4. Having a tugging on your heart; a persistent internal voice of "want to" that challenges where you are headed and what you are doing presently.

EXTERNAL SIGNS:

1. It will always agree with God's Word. You can know more about this by being consistent in Bible Study. It reveals God's Character, promises, and what He desires of you.

2. It will generally make good common sense; however, caution must be taken here in that it might be a step of faith that goes against the grain.

3. As you start taking steps in agreement with God, more and more peace will result, even though the world might become more and more upset.

Don't despair; don't give up; if you are genuinely struggling to discern God's Call. Know that He wants you to know; and does not hide His Will from you just because He can!

Be open to His Will and trust that God will guide you all along the way.

Be willing to surrender your will to God's Will; and you can do that right now; if that is what you want!

A NOTE FROM BROTHER TOM

As I have repeatedly said, this ministry was begun in response to a request for the notes I used in preaching a message that a lady wanted to review and relive.

As I look back over my life experiences, I can clearly see where God has been leading me to write! I thought it would be "white papers" in the field of Electrical Engineering or Communications in the military; and The Lord did, in fact, allow me to get some experience in those fields as I was asked to be a motivational speaker in a couple of engineering seminars at Oak Ridge; and teach classes in the military.

But, it always came back to the Ministry where the words just flowed from my

heart; and I knew - I just knew - the Ministry was where God was directing me. The question was - which part of the Ministry was to be my goal.

A very wise pastor, Bob Bevington (the man who led me to The Lord in 1965) told me I could never be contented until I was exactly where God wanted me to be. I am contented; deliriously contented!

Recently, I have been made aware that every person who shares these booklets is, in fact, preaching The Word of God! So, I will continue to write and provide this material for everyone to simply share; and let's watch God work! God bless you!

Tom Mooty; Newport, Tenn (2025)



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