**DAY 4**

**A HEARING EAR**

 *“So, then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*  Romans 10:17 (NIV)

This is review for most, so as a reminder, the word for hearing in this familiar verse is ‘rhema’ which means, “That which is uttered by the living voice.” For our prayer application today, ***it’s not merely what has been said or written, but what God is saying right now that produces faith***, resulting in powerful prayers, Jesus told us that his sheep would hear and recognize His voice (see John 10:27.) We can come into His presence with confidence knowing that He desires to speak to our hearts, and when we hear His voice dynamic faith ignites!

If you’ve walked with God for any period of time you realize how priceless and unique it is when the Lord speaks with clarity and certainty. I can testify that the most significant decisions and adventures of faith in my life, including marrying my wife and starting a church, came about as the direct result of hearing from God. I am so glad I did both! When we genuinely know God’s desire for our future, and His remedy for our particular problem or situation, we can then pray with faith and certainty.

God speaks to everyone in different ways, times and seasons but two common denominators can be found for those who are in consistent two-way communication.

* **THEY HEAR FROM GOD IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS WORD.**

The impressions, whispers, God-thoughts, or inner voice conversations will always be in alignment with and flow from what God has already said. One sure way of having increased, consistent communication with the Holy Spirit is to stay in the Word! Study the Word, meditate on the Word, and treasure the Word. This is the Lord’s primary mode of communication with us.

* **THEY HAVE DEVELOPED A HEARING EAR.**

There is a promise in Isaiah that I want you to receive as your own today. “*Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying*, *‘This is the way; walk in it*.’ ” Isaiah 30:21

What a promise! No matter what we are facing, no matter how complicated the situation or high the risk, if we will hear the voice of God then we have the guarantee of clear direction. In light of this scriptural truth, it would make perfect sense that **the enemy’s greatest and most effective weapons against us are distraction, confusion, a multiplicity of voices, and the inability to be still and listen**.

“Speak Lord, your servant is listening”

Today, consider the value of being still before God is light of the promise of hearing His voice when you wait in His presence. If hearing from God clearly and unmistakably is new territory for you, we are going to learn from a young man named Samuel who had his first conversation with God. You can read the full story in 1 Samuel Chapter 3.

*“One-night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God. Suddenly the Lord called out, ‘Samuel!’ ‘Yes?’ Samuel replied, ‘What is it?’ He got up and ran to Eli. ‘Here I am. Did you call me?’ ”* 1 Samuel 3:2-5

This was Samuel’s first encounter with hearing the voice of God and the starting point for two-way communication with God. Hearing the voice of God was so foreign to Samuel that he mistook God’s voice as that of his mentor and boss, Eli, the priest. After a couple of failed attempts to connect with God, Eli instructed Samuel to go lay down and when he hears the voice a third time to respond by saying, “Speak Lord, your servant is listening.”

**TAKE A MOMENT**

Like Samuel, pray this out loud, “***Speak Lord, your servant is listening***.” Quiet your heart and focus on His goodness and His desire to reveal himself to you. Let God know that he has your full attention. I find it best to have a tablet of paper, journal, or recording device readily available when I do this.

***Never underestimate the power of one clear sentence straight from the heart of God. / Remember, hearing clearly is a matter of proximity.***

**NOW, BACK TO SAMUEL**

Once Samuel understood who was speaking to him, and how to respond, he received a message that would not only change his life but the life of his nation. I have had the direction of my life completely change with just a few clear words of guidance from the Lord.

There is a lot we can learn from Samuel’s story, increasing our ability to hear the voice of God more clearly and consistently:

* **STAY NEAR THE PRESENCE**

*Verse 3* tells us that Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God. What a beautiful picture, to be resting right there in the very presence of God. This speaks to us of the need to have a heart of worship, and to find a place of intimate, uninterrupted conversation.

Once you experience the presence of God, don’t be in a hurry to move on. Make sure your ***Pursuit*** time involves plenty of worship and adoration with no agenda other than to draw close (James 4:8).

This reality carries on beyond your secret place and personal devotion. Many times, you will hear from God while standing with hundreds or thousands of worshippers. The key is to be where a true and powerful river of worship is flowing! Be willing to make the investment of time to go where the worshippers are gathered as well as create a place of private worship where you can be in the presence of God with consistency.

* **LAY DOWN AND WAIT**

It might not be crucial to get down in the prone position, but it never hurts. The idea is to find a place that is free of distraction so that you can quiet your mind and heart. Prayer is designed to be a dialog, not a monolog. If we only present our praise, rattle off requests, and then head out the door we are missing the most important moment of our ***Pursuit*** time, hearing God’s response. There is much to be said and great books have been written on hearing from God. For this devotional let’s simply make this point: hearing from God requires that we silence other voices, quiet our souls, and cease from striving (i.e. emails, calls, text messages, and social media.) God almost always speaks in a whisper, not a shout.

* **GIVE GOD YOUR “YES” IN ADVANCE**

The key to hearing from God consistently and repeatedly is simply doing the last thing he told you to do. The Lord entrusts those who can be trusted with more and withholds from those who squander the treasure of opportunities and instructions (see Matthew 13:12.) Be ready to say, “Yes Lord, speak your servant is listening” and “Here I am, send me” before the conversation ever takes place (Isaiah 6:8). Samuel had this kind of heart and preparation. As we develop a heart that is pliable, willing, and ready to move with God we can be assured that the conversations will increase as well as the clarity and certainty of what the Holy Spirit is saying.

* **PLACE A HIGH VALUE ON HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD**

The things we value we will invest in and make sacrifices for. Samuel was willing to direct his life and future based on the Word of the Lord. King David said:

“How precious to me are your thoughts, God How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand – when I awake, I am still with you.” Psalm 139:17-18

Today God is thinking about you! He has plans and desires for your future that He is waiting to reveal as you seek His face and wait to hear His voice. My prayer for you is that you would develop a passion to hear His voice at a level that every thought God thinks about you is a precious and priceless treasure. As you place a high value on hearing from God you will begin to invest more time, attention and even make sacrifices to position your life to say “speak Lord, your servant is listening.”

**MEMORY VERSE**

“Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it." Isaiah 30:21

**PRAYER DIRECTIVE**

Ask clearly and boldly for God to speak to you! Pray for all other competing voices to be silenced. Pray that you would have a strong desire to live near the presence of God and never leave! Grab your journal and Bible, fully expecting to hear clearly as you wait.

**THOUGHTS & NOTES**