

3

Samuel: Hearing God's Voice

1 Samuel 3

Amid the hustle and bustle of daily life, we often find it hard to hear God's voice. Many "voices" shout for our attention—deadlines to meet, bills to pay, meetings to attend, phone calls to make, children to care for. We try to read our Bible but struggle to be still and to receive a word from God.

GROUP DISCUSSION. In what ways does God speak to us today?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. When is it hard for you to hear God?

In the days of Samuel few people were listening to God's voice. Politically and spiritually Israel was in terrible shape as they "had no king" and "everyone did as he saw fit" (Judges 21:25). In this study we observe Samuel as a young man, hearing the word of the Lord for the first time and beginning his prophetic ministry. *Read 1 Samuel 3.*

1. How do verses 1-3 set the stage for the events in this chapter?

2. Why do you think Samuel has difficulty distinguishing God's voice from Eli's (vv. 4-8)?

3. What do you think Samuel thought and felt as he listened to Eli and then returned to his bed (vv. 9-10)?

4. Why is the attitude "Speak, for your servant is listening" (v. 10) important in order to hear from God?

5. How does Samuel's openness to hear from God compare with yours?

6. What does God say to Samuel in verses 11-14?

7. Why would this have been particularly hard for Samuel to hear?

8. What is the greatest obstacle that prevents you from hearing God's voice?

9. What is he tempted to do with the vision (vv. 15, 17)?

10. When are you tempted to hide God's word from others? Explain.

11. How does Samuel's obedience affect his relationship to God and his future ministry (vv. 19-21)?

12. In what ways does Samuel provide an example for you in your relationship with God?

13. What practical steps can you take to be more attentive to God's voice?

Pray that God will open your spiritual ears and eyes to hear and see him.

Now or Later

Read Mark 1:21-39, noting a typical day in the life of Jesus. What was the key for him to hear the Father?