

Series: Vintage Faith
Samuel

For the week beginning 7.4.11

Back when the telegraph was the fastest method of long-distance communication, a young man applied for a job as a Morse Code operator. Answering an ad in the newspaper, he went to the office address that was listed. When he arrived, the young man entered a large, busy office filled with noise and clatter, including the sound of the telegraph in the background. A sign on the receptionist's counter instructed job applicants to fill out a form and wait until they were summoned to enter the inner office.

The young man filled out his form and sat down with the seven other applicants in the waiting area. After a few minutes, he stood up, crossed the room to the door of the inner office, and walked right in. Naturally the other applicants perked up, wondering what was happening. They muttered amongst themselves that they hadn't heard any summons yet. Surely the young man went into the office by mistake and would be disqualified. Within a few minutes, however, the employer escorted the young man out of the office and said to the other applicants, "Gentlemen, thank you very much for coming, but the job has just been filled."

The other applicants began grumbling to each other, and one spoke up saying, "Wait a minute, I don't understand. He was the last to come in, and we never even got a chance to be interviewed. Yet he got the job. That's not fair!"

The employer said, "I'm sorry, but all the time you've been sitting here, the telegraph has been ticking out the following message in Morse Code: 'If you understand this message, then come right in. The job is yours.' None of you heard it or understood it. This young man did. The job is his."

This past weekend Ben talked about Samuel and his experience with listening to the still, small voice of God. John 8:47 says, "He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God." This week the Living It Out daily study will help you, if you profess to be following Jesus Christ, become more aware of the times when God is speaking to you. If you have yet to become a Christ-follower, then you'll be more aware of how you can become one and start to hear His voice.

We live in a world that is full of busyness and clatter, like the Morse Code office. People are distracted and unable to hear the still, small voice of God as He speaks to them. What about you? Are you tuned in to God's voice? Do you hear God when He speaks to you? Are you listening?

-portions adapted from sermoncentral.com, Holy Headphones

"You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time."
-M. Scott Peck

IN THIS WEEK'S STUDY WE ARE GOING TO FOCUS ON LISTENING AND LIVING OUT GOD'S WILL FOR OUR LIVES.

MONDAY— Hearing from God

Big Point: *God's will is simpler than we tend to make it.*

Here is an observation from Bill Hybels, author of the book, The Power of a Whisper: “The message that the Lord then spoke to young Samuel was a prophetic promise that would radically impact an entire nation. But the content of that message is not what struck me as I sat in my wooden grade-school desk. What struck me was the fact that the content got conveyed through the ears and lips of a little boy!”

Young Samuel was asleep in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God when he heard someone calling him. Three times Samuel went to Eli and asked if Eli was calling him. After repeatedly telling Samuel to “Go back to bed,” Eli finally realized it was God who was calling Samuel. Eli told Samuel the next time he heard someone calling his name to tell God he was listening. When God spoke again, Samuel responded.

READ...What does the Bible say?

1 Timothy 4:12 (New International Version)

¹²Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

Romans 8:28 (New International Version)

²⁸And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Matthew 28:19-20 (New International Version)

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

THINK...Find the answers

Throughout the Bible, God uses unusual people to deliver important messages. God chose Mary to give birth to His Son, Jesus. God used a shepherd boy named David to encourage the Israelites and slay a giant and women, to proclaim Jesus' resurrection. No one is too insignificant to be used by God!

In 1 Timothy, what encouragement does God give young people? What instructions?

Matthew 28:19-20 is referred to as The Great Commission, in which Jesus gave final instructions to his followers after His resurrection. What did Jesus call all Christ-followers to do?

OUR MISSION: Help the spiritually restless and unchurched people LOVE Jesus, SERVE others, and TELL the world about Christ.

LIVE...What will you do now?

When you read Matthew 28:19-20, what information do you gather that helps you identify God's will for your life (if you consider yourself a Christ-follower)?

What situation is challenging your faith these days? Is there something you keep asking God about over and over again because it seems that He hasn't provided an answer? What is it?

Re-read Romans 8:28. If you really trust that your heavenly Father loves you and that He is powerful and He is a provider, then stop freaking out! You are going to get where God wants you to go. What verses testify to God's provision for you? (You might need to get out your Bible, but finding those verses is worth it!)

PRAY...God, what do you want me to know & do?

In the box to the right is a poem that Bill Hybels memorized as a little boy. This child's prayer can be your inspiration as you pray today that God will give you ears like Samuel to be open and hear His word.

*Oh! give me Samuel's ear,
An open ear, O Lord,
Alive and quick to hear
Each whisper of Thy Word;
Like him to answer to Thy call
And to obey Thee first of all.*

DAILY BIBLE READING COMMENTARY: Proverbs 17-18

17:3—*It takes intense heat to purify gold and silver. In the same manner, Christians have the potential to experience tremendous spiritual growth while enduring intense challenges.*

17:5—*Making fun of those who are less fortunate is offensive to God because we are called to love and care for those who lack the ability to provide for themselves.*

17:8—*“lucky charm” The Bible does not condone bribery, but the writer does observe that bribery is effective in getting what one wants.*

17:9—*Is there someone that you need to forgive today for offending you? Remember, forgiveness is choosing to let go of the offense, but it isn't the same as reconciliation (which may or may not be possible).*

17:14—*If we followed the counsel of this verse, our marriages and interactions with our children and parents would improve immediately.*

17:22—*There is such potential for us to be a blessing when we are known for greeting others with a smile on our face.*

18:4—*Even though we cannot know the future, when we have God's wisdom planted within our hearts, we are able to apply it to every situation in life.*

18:6—*This verse evokes a question: “How often do you get into arguments with others?” If you are always getting into disagreements with others, perhaps you need to consider the words that you use.*

18:8—*Everyone likes to hear the “dirt” about others. However, if we refrain from hearing the first tidbit, it's easier to ignore the rest.*

18:21—*This verse reflects the theme of James 3.*

18:24—*King Solomon may not have been familiar with the term “frenemy.” Are you known as a friend that blesses or breaks down friendships?*