

Growth Group Homework

For the week of November 9, 2014

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. We all have different personality types and temperaments that impact how we interact and relate to others (outgoing, quiet, thinking out loud, internally processing, optimistic, high energy, mellow, free flowing, systematic, intuitive, skeptic, reflective, analytical, to name a few). What terms would you use to describe your personality?

How might the way you are wired help you relate and listen to God?

Can you think of any ways it makes it more difficult?

2. How we interact with those we're closest to has normal ebbs and flows of conversation—from joking around, to normal conversations about the day and tasks to be completed, to more in-depth conversations of important issues or occurrences in life. How would you say your ability to listen and talk with God is similar or different than those who are closest to you?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. We saw in this week's sermon that Eli was no longer listening to God, while Samuel was. Most of us would prefer to end up being more like Samuel, and not Eli. Unfortunately, like any relationship, there can be roadblocks that we may or may not be aware of that erode and even cut off our ability to hear what God is saying. What potential roadblocks do the following verses describe?

Proverbs 21:13

Mark 11:25

James 4:3-4

1 John 5:14

Is there one that you think people tend to forget more than others? Which one is most important for you to hear?

2. As you read Luke 10:38-42 what do we learn about how “good intentions and actions” can result in bad distractions, causing us to not really tune into what God wants to tell us?

Can you think of any specific examples of good and/or “godly” actions becoming a distraction from hearing what God wants us to hear and do?

3. Nehemiah was an incredible leader in the Old Testament who helped restore the Israelite nation even under oppressive leadership. He is a person many study even today to learn about effective leadership. Nehemiah’s life went far beyond just asking God for what he wanted, but also listening to and interacting with him. Read Nehemiah 1:1-10 and jot down anything you find that gives you insight into Nehemiah's relationship and communication with God.

How might these insights impact or help you to grow in what it means to listen to God in your life?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Just like we all have different personalities and how we interact with others and renew ourselves, the same is true in how we best connect with God and hear his voice. Below is a list of ways people connect to God beyond reading, hearing and applying what God has to say to us in Scripture. Read through the list and answer the following questions:

Bible reading	Solitude
Analytical study of Scripture	Memorization
Discussion with others	Worship
Anonymous acts of service	Prayer
Sharing your faith	Journaling
Outdoors alone	Other

Which, two or three are most effective for you when it comes to connecting with and listening to God?

Are there any you have tried and haven't found effective at all?

2. Is there anything you know God is telling you that you need to listen to and act on?

Prayer Requests:

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Proverbs 21:13

13 Whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the poor
will also cry out and not be answered. [NIV]

Mark 11:25

25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." [NIV]

James 4:3-4

3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. [NIV]

1 John 5:14

14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. [NIV]

Is there one that you think people tend to forget more than others? Which one is most important for you to hear?

2. As you read Luke 10:38-42 what do we learn about how “good intentions and actions” can result in bad distractions, causing us to not really tune into what God wants to tell us?

Luke 10:38-42

At the Home of Martha and Mary

38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

41 “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” [NIV]

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Nehemiah 1:1-10

Nehemiah’s Prayer

1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah:

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, 2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

3 They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. 5 Then I said:

"Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, 6 let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. 7 We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

8 "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, 9 but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

10 "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. [NIV]

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