

Week Three - Samuel: Born to Listen

1 Samuel 3:1-11, 19-21

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Read 1 Samuel 1:1-11. Have you ever been in Hannah's shoes — wanted something so much that you bargained with God? How did (does) that feel? Can you put it into words?
2. Hopefully you did not have a rival who goaded you during your struggle as Hannah did. How might that have increased Hannah's pain?
3. How would you have reacted to Hannah's rival?
4. Read 1 Samuel 1:12-20. Hannah must have looked pretty crazy to Elkanah if he thought she was drunk. What happened after she told him what was troubling her?
5. How might she have felt after feeling heard by her husband?
6. Look again at 1 Samuel 1: 20. Why did Hannah choose the name Samuel for her son?
7. Read 1 Samuel 2:1-11. What is it like to feel truly *heard* by God?
8. Even if no one else listens to us in our lives, we can count on God to hear us. Spend the rest of your FIFTEEN telling God anything you need to get off your chest. Remember he will be faithful to hear you.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

9. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the best score), how would you rate yourself as a listener? What factors affected your assessment?
10. Yesterday, we looked at how good it feels to be heard. Do the people you love most feel heard by you? (Hint, look at your self-assessment in question 9.)
11. Read 1 Samuel 3:1-10. As his mother promised, Samuel served the Lord under Eli. According to verse 1, why might Samuel not realize that it was God speaking to him?
12. What did Samuel say when he finally realized that it was actually God who was speaking to him?

13. Interestingly, the name Samuel means “God listens.” And yet in this moment, God was going to speak directly to Samuel. Given God’s relative silence at this point in his life, how might Samuel have felt in this moment?
14. Do you believe God has ever talked to you? If so, what were the circumstances?
15. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, invite God to speak to you as Samuel did. Then spend some quiet moments listening for his voice.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

16. Look again at 1 Samuel 3:1-11. Maybe one of the reasons that God had been more silent than usual was that no one was listening to him on a regular basis. How do you react when you feel no one is listening to you?
17. What did God say he was going to do in verse 11? Would that get your attention?
18. Now continue reading 1 Samuel 3:18-21. What did God routinely do from the first time he spoke to Samuel?
19. How might the fact that God routinely talked to Samuel have impacted his attitude toward hearing from God?
20. How would your attitude about listening to God be affected if you knew God would talk to you?
21. Read Hebrews 1:1-2. How can we be certain to hear from God?
22. While the people of Samuel’s time did not hear much from God, we have the privilege of being able to read God’s very Word in the Bible whenever we need to hear from him. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, ask God to give you a fresh excitement to read his Word every day.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

23. Yesterday, we saw an example of one of the consequences when people do not listen to God — he stopped talking. How would you feel if God stopped talking to you? Does that scare you? Would that make a difference at all or do you feel your life would be about the same?
24. Look again at 1 Samuel 3:19-21. What happened as a result of Samuel listening to God?
25. How would it feel to have a life with that kind of impact?

26. Samuel was literally born to listen. Samuel listened to God and it made him a powerful leader. Why is it important that each of us is also a good listener?
27. God created us to be in relationship with others. How is listening vital to having fulfilling relationships?
28. How can you become a better listener to others in your life? Brainstorm a list of steps you can take.
29. Finish your FIFTEEN by asking God to help you accomplish these steps. Then get out your calendar and start scheduling some actions.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

30. As a whole, humans are not great listeners. This truth keeps doctors, pastors, counselors, even hairstylists and bartenders pretty busy. What makes listening so difficult for us?
31. Listening can have life or death consequences. Have you ever found yourself in a predicament that someone tried to warn you about? How did that add to your misery?
32. Read John 5:24-30. What kind of life or death consequences does this passage talk about?
33. Jesus is warning us about the very thing Samuel tried to warn his people about — listening and obeying the Word of God. How does looking at it that way affect whether or not you want to hear from God?
34. Since most of us are not great at listening to God, what good news do we find in this verse?
35. Because of Jesus, we have eternal life, even if we are not great at hearing and obeying him. Because Jesus died and covered us in his righteousness, we will not be judged. What reasons do we still have to continue to seek to hear his voice?
36. As you finish your final FIFTEEN this week, ask God to help you hear him clearly and have the ability to heed what he says.