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YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINISTRIES



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What does God's voice sound like? A free Lesson on God's Calling

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Hearing God's call can only happen when we know what God's voice sounds like. This lesson does just that as

students explore the call of Moses.

Whisper Icebreaker

Begin this icebreaker by giving everyone in the group a piece of paper and asking them to write their first name on it. Then, select a person to be the “listener” and ask them to turn around so that their back faces the group. The goal is for the listener to be able to recognize the whispers of the others in the group.

Begin by going around the group having each member say their first name.

Then, ask the group members to either swap names with another person (by trading papers) or keep their own name. It’s up to each member what they want to do.

After the name swapping is finished, take turns having each person walk up behind the listener and whisper the name on their piece of paper.

After each person, the whisperer will say real or fake depending on whether or not they think the whisperer is

saying the whisperer's name or the name of someone else.

If you want to make it harder, have each person whisper a random fact about themselves, and have the listener try to guess to whom the attribute belongs.

Hearing God's voice...

Hearing God's call on your life in regards to your faith and career is based on a fundamental, confusing part of being a Christian: hearing God's voice. So, what does it sound like? How do we hear it?

We are going to look at a couple of stories to help us plunge into these big, important questions

We are going to start by looking at Moses before he was the big spiritual leader of the people of Israel. At this point he is just a criminal who is trying to make a new life for himself in a place where people don't know about his past. When we read this, its important to remember that even though this is Moses, this is Moses before he has spent hours communing with God, before he received the Ten

Commandments, and before he told Pharaoh to “Let God’s people go.” This is the “average guy” version of Moses:

Read Exodus 3:1-4

Moses is going about his day, doing his everyday work as a shepherd. He has been in this area before. He has seen these bushes. This is just another day. Then, he sees something. There is a bush burning. Again, nothing special, but he looks closer. After he takes the time to stare at this pretty average sight, he notices something different. He notices that there is something supernatural going on. Then, he hears God speaking his name, and he responds. Every single piece of that is instructive to us when we think about listening to the voice of God.

First, Moses was present and open to the fact that something supernatural might happen. Put another way, he was open to the idea that God may speak to him at any point.

What would that look like in your life? What would it mean to be open to the fact that God could talk to you at any

moment?

His staring at the bush helps us see how fully-engaged he was with what was happening right then. He didn't dismiss the bush, he considered it.

What are some of the things in your life/world that make it difficult for you to be fully-engaged with the present?

What distracts you from living in the now?

After he considers the bush, he sees that God is at work in it. He gets the inclination that there is something more going on and opens himself up to whatever that might be.

Some of the Christian mystics talk about things “sparkling” spiritually. Like a shiny object on the pavement catches your physical eye, sometimes something will catch your spiritual eye in the same way.

Have you ever had that experience? Have you ever sensed the presence of God in your everyday life? Share that story.

What did you notice?

Once Moses had fully turned his attention to the bush, once he had begun to try and figure out what could be

going on, he noticed God speaking his name. God was trying to get his attention. When he heard this, he responded letting God know he was listening.

What kinds of things could the Bible mean by “Moses heard?”

Have you ever heard God’s voice in one of those ways?
How did you know it was God’s voice?

Moses’ response shows us the importance of being open to God speaking to us at any time. It shows us how being fully engaged with what is going on around us plays a huge role in whether or not we will notice where God is trying to get our attention. But what should we expect? What will God’s voice sound like?

Let’s look at another Old Testament passage to help us find that answer. In this passage, Elijah has just had a major high-point in his life that was immediately followed by a major low-point. After hiding for a while, God tells Elijah to go to a mountain and wait for God.

Read 1 Kings 19:11-13

What surprised you about this passage?

Take a moment to think about this passage and try to boil the meaning down to a single sentence, like a “moral of the story.” Then share the meanings with everyone else.

Have you ever been confused about God’s voice like Elijah? Tell that story.

How do you think Elijah knew which of those things was God’s voice?

That last question is a tough one. We can get some help from Jesus in John 10.

Read John 10:1-5

Jesus is using the metaphor of a Shepherd and sheep to talk about a whole host of things. It says the sheep (us) follow the shepherd (Jesus) because they know his voice. To understand this, you need to understand two things. First, sheep are pretty dumb. They have tiny brains, and cannot learn or understand much. Second, sheep and shepherds spent all day every day with each other, and it is

only by spending all this time together that sheep learn the shepherd's voice. Since it is so hard for sheep to learn something, it is not easy for a stranger to trick them because it would take the same amount of time with the stranger to trick them.

Knowing all of that, what things does this teach us about hearing and understanding Jesus' voice?

However, all of this depends on us being able to discern Jesus' voice in the first place, and it is sometimes as difficult as recognizing one whisper among many. That can be hard, but that's where we are going in the next session.

My Discernment

What kinds of things do you think you may have heard God say. Or, What are the things you would really like to know whether they are your ideas or God's?

Take a moment now and pray about these. Say each of them and ask God to help you know whether the particular

statement/idea has come from you, God, or both. Try doing this a couple more times before the next session.

Youth

Small Groups

Dialogue

Discernment



When he's not playing with his four children with his wonderful wife, Jeremy is the associate pastor at Los Altos UMC in Los Altos, CA. Jeremy has spent over twenty years working in youth and children's ministry and continues to train children and youth workers as well as writing and speaking extensively in that field. His most recent book is the "All the Best Questions." You can find a list of all his books, articles, and resources for churches at JeremyWords.com.