

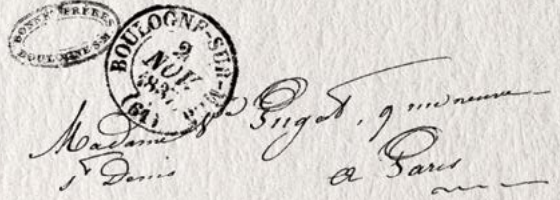
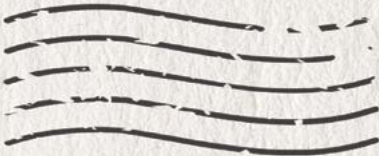
1 Samuel 3:9 NIV So Eli told Samuel. "Go and

lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

LISTENING TO GOD



WEEK  
3



## week 3

## Listening to God

**1 Samuel 3:9 NIV: So Eli told Samuel, “Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.**

## introduction

Jesus assured His disciples that His sheep would hear His voice. Yet, listening to God and discerning His voice might be one of the most misunderstood facets of the Christian life. Most of us have never heard an audible voice, and we're not sure we recognize the voice of our Shepherd.

God speaks in many different ways: through creation, the prophets in times past, the coming of Jesus, His written Word, and the Holy Spirit. Many have also sensed His leading through circumstances, people, and church.

This week's passage depicts God calling Samuel, Israel's judge and prophet, who would anoint the first two kings of Israel. While God speaks in an audible voice to the boy He was raising as a prophet, this passage offers encouragement to us: God cares about the character, disposition, and relationship of the listener with Himself. Our part is to cultivate a teachable heart that desires to honor and obey God; His part is to lead us in ways we can understand.

**SIMPLE PRAYER:** Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.

**PRAYER PRACTICE:** This week, each time you open Scripture, pause for a moment and pray the words of 1 Samuel 3:9, “Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.” Ask the Lord to speak to you and give you a willing heart to hear and obey Him.



**POSTCARD:** Remove this week's postcard in the back of this guide, and put it in a prominent place as a reminder to pray. When you pray for someone else, write a note on the back of the postcard, and give it to them as an encouragement and an opportunity to start a conversation about Jesus.

# day 1

## READ 1 SAMUEL 3

As you begin studying this chapter, remember the passage's general context. Samuel was born during the judges' time when no king ruled Israel.

### Consider 1 Samuel 3:1-9.

1 | What repeated words or phrases seem significant to you? Jot them down here:

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2 | How does v. 1 describe the general situation in Israel? Read the summary statement of the period of the judges in Judges 21:25. How does this verse give context for what is not happening, as described in 1 Samuel 3:1?

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3 | How would you summarize what happens in vv. 4-6?

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4 | How does v. 7 explain Samuel's assumption that Eli is the one calling him?

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5 | What do we learn about Samuel's character and disposition from his repeated words and actions in verses 4-8? (Note: The lamp not going out yet in the temple signifies this happened sometime in the night, before dawn, when Samuel was most likely sleeping.)

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## PRAY

In the space below, copy this week’s simple prayer: **Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.**

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Turn your heart to God as you pray along with these words from *The Pursuit of God* by A.W. Tozer:

“Lord, teach me to listen. The times are noisy, and my ears are weary with the thousand raucous sounds which continuously assault them. Give me the spirit of the boy Samuel when he said to You, ‘Speak, for your servant hears.’ Let me hear You speaking in my heart. Let me get used to the sound of Your Voice, that its tones may be familiar when the sounds of earth die away and the only sound will be the music of Your speaking Voice. Amen.”

day 2

## READ 1 SAMUEL 3

Hear (ESV): שָׁמָא *shama*

To hear, to listen to, to obey or heed; to hear intelligently (often with implication of attention and obedience). “Shama” is used 66 times in 1 Samuel.

[\\*blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org)

### Consider 1 Samuel 3:10-21.

1 | Returning to Samuel’s prayer (v. 10), what kind of heart attitude does Samuel model concerning God and the words God might speak?

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2 | The central focus and hinge of this passage is the word the Lord speaks to Samuel (vv. 11-14). (vv. 1-9 lead up to it, and vv. 15-21 describe the aftermath of the message.) What does the Lord say? What reason does He give for the action He will take against Eli the priest?

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3 | Read 1 Samuel 2:12-17 and 1 Samuel 2:22 to understand the context behind the Lord's message to Samuel. What do you learn about Eli's sons?

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4 | For the backstory on Eli's sons, Leviticus 7:30-31 specified that priests would burn the fat as an offering and could take the breast and right thigh of sacrificed animals. How does this contrast with Eli's sons' behavior in 1 Samuel 2:12-17 and 22? What do you deduce about their character and heart attitude toward God's commands?

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5 | How does Samuel's attitude toward the Lord's words contrast with the attitude of Eli's sons toward God's revealed commands?

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6 | Sometimes, we struggle to heed God's voice or direction. Like Eli's sons, have you ever been tempted to do something you knew would not please God? How did you handle it?

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## PRAY

Pray Samuel's words: **Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.**

Pray for a receptive heart toward God, sensitivity to His voice through His Word, and awareness of His Spirit's prompting.

# day 3

## **LISTEN TO 1 SAMUEL 3 ON YOUR FAVORITE BIBLE APP, AND FOLLOW ALONG IN YOUR BIBLE.**

1 | After receiving the message from the Lord, why is Samuel afraid to tell Eli the vision or word he received (v. 15)? Does his fear deter him (v. 18)?

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2 | At Northwest, one of our core values is "God's Truth over our opinion." How is this related to God's message and the situation of Eli and his sons?

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3 | Can you think of a time when you had to share God's Truth with someone and weren't sure how they would receive it?

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4 | How does Samuel's example encourage you when it comes to taking risks for Jesus or standing for God's Truth?

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5 | How does Eli respond (v. 18), and what does this tell you about Eli?

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6 | How is Samuel described (vv. 19-20)?

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7 | How does v. 21 relate to v. 1? How does the ending of the narrative contrast with the beginning?

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## PRAY

This week, pray for the leaders of our church as you pray our simple prayer: **Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.**

- Ask God to make their hearts humble and open before Him.
- Pray they would be sensitive to God's leading through His Spirit and Word.
- Pray for someone you know who might need to hear and heed God's voice.

day 4

## READ PSALM 119:1-18

God's Word is full of prayers. Every week, we will examine a prayer in the Bible with a similar theme to our study.

Word (ESV): דְבַר *dabar*

Word, speech, speaking, thing.

\*blueletterbible.org

The Hebrew word "dabar" occurs seven times in 1 Samuel 3. (It is most often translated as "word," but in v. 11, it is rendered "thing," and in v. 17, Eli says, "What was 'it' that he told you?") The same word "dabar" is used 23 times in Psalm 119, referring to the written Word of God.

Written to exalt the Word of God, Psalm 119 is an acrostic poem that includes one stanza for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In Hebrew, the first word of each line in a given stanza starts with the same letter.

1 | This psalm begins with a general description of the blessed life. What are some important keys to a life blessed by God (vv. 1-3)?

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2 | Besides “dabar,” which refers to general revelation from God, Psalm 119 uses at least 8 other synonyms to describe God’s Word. List some of them (vv. 1-18).

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3 | How does the psalmist describe his response to God’s Word? List some verbs (action words) indicating his actions or attitudes toward God’s Word (vv. 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16).

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4 | What does the psalmist ask God (vv. 12, 18)? What heart posture does he convey?

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5 | How does the psalmist’s prayer in Psalm 119:18 relate to Samuel’s prayer in 1 Samuel 3:9? How does this encourage you to learn to discern and listen for God’s voice?

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**PRAY**

Write your own simple prayer that flows from your thoughts on Psalm 119:18 and **Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.**

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# day 5

## REFLECTION ON 1 SAMUEL 3

1 | Can you remember a time when you struggled to hear God's voice and weren't sure you understood what He was saying?

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2 | God speaks to us through His creation, Scripture, circumstances, events, the Holy Spirit, and other people, particularly His Church. Besides Scripture, which of these ways does He most often use in your life?

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3 | Thinking over 1 Samuel 3, how does this chapter relate to the importance of community as we seek to discern God's voice? How does the interaction in v. 18 lead to the confirmation of God's words to Samuel?

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4 | What distracts you from hearing God's voice? What competing voices do you often struggle to resist?

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5 | Read Jesus' reassuring words in John 10:27-28. How does this encourage you when it comes to your ability to recognize the voice of the Shepherd? (See also John 10:1-5.)

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