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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks
Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas**



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Effective Prayer - Part 2

1 Sam 3:1-10

The phrase "Speak Lord, I am listening" has many aspects to it. First, is the knowledge and agreement that God speaks to me and that He has something for me to **learn and obey**. Second, God is my Lord. Lord means Master and One whom I am to serve without hesitation. Lord also represents honor and authority, and surely God deserves and has both. Then probably the most important for me is the last point that I must listen to what God says. The essence is that I am to **understand** and take action based upon that understanding. Vines states this definition as that it may mean to come into knowledge about. The intent clearly is more than just to hear something; it is intended to gain some knowledge from the Lord. Hearing can be both intellectual and spiritual. Spiritually, one may hear God's Word (Num 24:4), or learn it from God. To hear can also mean not only to hear what is said, but to agree with its intention or petition (Gen 16:11). In the case of hearing and hearkening to a higher authority, shama can mean to obey. To have a "hearing heart" is to have discernment or understanding (1 Kings 3:9). It means to examine the merits of a case, so as to render a just decision (Deut 1:16). To quote Thomas à Kempis (1379-1471), blessed indeed are those ears which listen not for the voice sounding without, but for the truth teaching inwardly. Blessed are the eyes that are shut to outward things but intent on things inward. Blessed are they who are glad to have time to spare for God, and who shake off all worldly hindrances. Consider these things, O my soul, and hear what the Lord your God speaks. God speaks through His Word to those who listen with their heart. To listen is to hear with understanding with the goal of an appropriate response. Listening is more than hearing, it is also verifying the accuracy of words I am being told and making changes in my life based on the conviction of God (Acts 17:11; James 1:22). God will continue to speak to me until I hear. God speaks through the Holy Spirit, His Word and circumstances. Listening begins with **discernment**, which is recognizing the source and meaning. It also involves analysis and testing of the information received as well as yielding mind and senses (physical and spiritual) so as to give total attention and priority. This yielding is in acknowledgement of being God's servant and understanding the relationship between God and myself. Listening should be to learn and accept God's assignment and His imparted knowledge. Response to listening should be immediate **obedience**. My response should also include trust and faith in God, submission to God, and availability of myself to God's calling. I am to be God's servant, which means that I approach all things in a humble manner and seek the goal of being a faithful and obedient minister in God's service. To hear better, I should read, study, meditate and pray. Ensure I take the time to listen.

Four elements of listening to God.

1. **Hear the voice of God** - This is not necessarily physically hearing God, but is the spiritual recognition that God is trying to get my attention. Note that God called Samuel by name. God speaks to His people personally and intimately (Ex 33:17; John 3:10) and therefore my relationship with God should be that we constantly are talking to each other (1 Thess 5:17; Heb 13:15). God speaks to me in many ways (Heb 1:1-2), yet, God speaks so that I will hear Him (Rev 13:9) and wants me to be patient and faithful in seeking His wisdom (Rev 13:10)
2. **Answer the call** - As Matthew Henry comments, the call which divine grace designs to make effectual shall be repeated till it is so, that is, till we come at the call; for the purpose of God, according to which we are called, shall certainly stand.
3. **Learn and know God's revealed word** - I must beware that I don't just read and humanly understand, but spiritually discern God's meaning and purpose (1 Cor 2:11-16). As Adam Clarke describes, Samuel knew and worshipped the God of Israel; but he did not know him as communicating special revelation of His will. Matthew Henry comments on this by stating that Samuel was still ignorant that it was the Lord that called him (v. 7): Samuel did not yet know the Lord. He knew the written word, and was acquainted with the mind of God in that, but he did not yet apprehend the way in which God reveals himself to his servants the prophets, especially by a still small voice; this was altogether new and strange to him. Those that have the greatest knowledge of divine things must remember the time when they were as babes, unskillful in the word of righteousness. When I was a child I understood as a child. Yet let us not despise the day of small things. Thus did Samuel (so the margin reads it) before he knew the Lord, and before the word of the Lord was revealed unto him; thus he blundered one time after another, but afterwards he understood his duty better. The witness of the Spirit in the hearts of the faithful is often thus mistaken, by which means they lose the comfort of it; and the strivings of the Spirit with the consciences of sinners are likewise often mistaken, and so the benefit of their convictions is lost. God speaketh once, yea, twice, but man perceiveth it not, Job 33:14.
4. **Be receptive to God's word** - By being receptive I mean accept God's word as the actual words of God (1 Thess 2:13). As a servant of God, I must always seek and be faithful to sound doctrine in God's word (1 Tim 4:16). Again as Matthew Henry comments, a Christian must call himself God's servant, must desire to know the mind of God. "Speak, Lord, speak to me, speak now:" and he must prepare to hear, and promise to attend: Thy servant heareth. Note, then we may expect that God will speak to us, when we set ourselves to hearken to what he says, Ps 85:8; Hab 2:1. When we come to read the word of God, and to attend the preaching of it, we should come thus disposed, submitting ourselves to the commanding light and power of it: Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.

(Excerpts from Personal Devotionals)

PRAYER "Teach Us To Pray"

| Date | Lesson |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| 01/11 | Understanding Prayer (JH) |
| 01/18 | How Prayer Changes Us (DS) |
| 01/25 | How Prayer Changes God (DS) |
| 02/01 | Unanswered Prayers (DS) |
| 02/08 | Effective Prayer - Part 1 (JH) |
| 02/15 | Effective Prayer - Part 2 (JH) |
| 02/22 | Music and Prayer (RH) |

Food for Thought

Past, Present and Future

The PAST is HISTORY.
The FUTURE is a MYSTERY.
The MOMENT is a GIFT.
That's why it's called a PRESENT!

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday
and today and forever.*

Hebrews 13:8 (NIV)

(shared by a Class Member)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Learning to Listen

Matt 13:9-17

THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING (MATT 13:9-13)

Listening is more than hearing (vs 9-10)

Listening is being receptive to what God's says (1 Sam 3:10)

Listening has as its foundation the intent to practice what one has learned (Heb 5:14)

To truly listen to God one has to know God (1 John 4:6)

Listening means recognizing being in the presence of God (Acts 10:33)

Listening means spiritually discerning what God says (1 Cor 2:14)

Not only should one hear, but also do God's word (James 1:22)

Listening is understanding (vs 11-12)

Understanding what one hears should manifest itself through living a life by doing good deeds (James 3:13)

God gives His Holy Spirit so that we may understand Him (1 Cor 2:12)

The goal of listening is to gain more knowledge and depth of insight from God, which brings understanding (Phil 1:9-10)

We should take the example of the Bereans and find understanding through examining the Scriptures daily to search for truth (Acts 17:11)

Meditation on God's Word, as well as listening, brings insight and understanding (Ps 119:99)

Fearing God and obtaining more knowledge about His Holy Spirit brings understanding (Prov 9:10)

THE DISCREPANCIES IN LISTENING (MATT 13:14-17)

The discrepancy of dull hearts (vs 14-15)

Dull hearts because of stubbornness (Zech 7:11-12)

Dull hearts because of wanting to hold on to sin and desires influenced by the devil (John 8:42-44)

Dull hearts because of not putting up with sound doctrine and only wanting to hear about own desires (2 Tim 4:3-4)

Dull hearts because of being corrupt through turning from God (Ps 14:2-3)

Dull hearts because of ignorance of God (Eph 4:18)

Dull hearts because Satan has blinded the mind (2 Cor 4:2-4)

Dull hearts because of not having God take away the veil of unbelief (2 Cor 3:14-16)

Dull hearts because not having the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:14)

The discrepancy of missed blessings by not hearing (vs 16-17)

Missed blessing because of allowing Satan to take away the one way to understanding and maturity (Luke 8:11-14)

Missed blessing because of not hearing the good news (Rom 10:13-15)

Missed blessing that leads to death without knowledge (Job 36:12)

Missed blessing because of destruction through lack of knowledge (Hos 4:6)

Missed blessing that leads to eating the fruit of own ways (Prov 1:29-32)

Missed blessing by not recognizing the way to eternal life (John 5:38-40)

Missed blessing that leads to God's wrath and anger (Rom 2:8)

Missed blessing through rejecting God and His Holy Spirit (1 Thess 4:8)