"Tuning Into God's Voice"

John 10:1-27

STRENGTH for the Journey with Joe Stowell
Part of the RBC family of Ministries

Group Study Introduction

Use the following questions and exercises as your group time allows. Feel free to skip one or more questions in each section as necessary. If you have less then thirty minutes for group discussion, we recommend skipping the "Getting Started" section. Be sure to save time for prayer at the end of your meeting, using the "Strength through Prayer" section.

Getting Started:

In this segment, Joe Stowell discusses the question of whether God speaks to people audibly.

- Do you know anyone who claims that the Lord has spoken to them audibly?

- Joe mentions God's undeniable voice in the form of a repeated thought from God, where He presses your spirit with something you need to hear from Him. Can you recall such an experience?

Strength through Scripture:

Open your Bibles and have a volunteer read John 10:1-18 and 10:27 out loud.

1. What does Joe mean when he says that God speaking audibly to people in the Bible is rare, missiological, and risky?

2. Joe states that the more typical way we hear the Spirit speak to us is through reading and studying God's Word. Have you ever been reading the Bible when God suddenly and clearly spoke to you?

Notes:

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."
John 10:27

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3. Joe states that another typical way we hear God's voice is by God's Word proclaimed through preaching. Have you had an experience like the man who shared, "Pastor, last Sunday 10 minutes into the message you disappeared and I heard from God"?

4. Have you ever tried writing down what God said to you through a sermon?

5. What does Joe mean by saying that when God speaks to you there's an end game—you can follow His voice with confidence because He wants to take you somewhere?

Digging Deeper:

If your group has enough time (i.e., you've listened to the audio on your own), answer one or more of these optional questions.

1. Joe shares a story about a supposed "word from God" that just about destroyed a Christian organization. Have you ever seen something like that happen?

2. What does Joe mean by saying that we should read God's Word to hear His voice?

3. Joe said, "We don't need any more Bible bureaucrats who love to study the Bible but whose lives are like spiritual pygmies." Do you know people like that? On the other hand, do you know people who have been powerfully and personally spoken to through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God?

Strength through Sharing:

1. Have you had much experience with tuning in to God's voice by memorizing Scripture and/or meditating on Scripture? Can you relate to Joe's observation that doing so is therapeutic?

2. Read the "Call to Action" below. Which of these five steps will you particularly focus on in the days ahead?

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Strength through Prayer:

Spend a few moments as a group in silent, personal prayer. Commit to being the kind of person who tunes in to God's voice and to whom God speaks powerfully and personally through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

You may want to begin your prayer with these words:

"Dear God, may I have the attitude of young Samuel in the Old Testament, who said, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.' Whether or not I ever hear Your audible voice, thank You for the undeniable way You stir my spirit with the message I need to hear from You. And thank You that when You speak to me, You take me someplace really good!"

When you are finished with this time for silent, personal prayer, you may want to move into a time of group prayer, praying for one another.

Closing Call to Action:

Here are five actions steps to take:

1. Make listening for God's voice a routine. If you need to make a decision, make it a habit to ask God what He wants to tell you.

2. Create spaces of silence where you sit quietly and ask God to speak to your heart. It's amazing how He will tell you about what you need to change or bring a message from His Word to your heart.

3. Memorize Scripture strategically. When you desperately need to hear God's voice regarding some challenge or burden in your life, go to God's Word and find a passage that speaks to that issue. Memorize it and pray it back to Him—and then run it through your heart all day long. God will use it to speak to you in a wonderful way.

4. Keep track of what God says. Journal what He has said to you. Later you can go back, and it will give you confidence that He has spoken to you in key times of your life.

5. Remember to stop, look at God's Word, and listen to His voice. You can't walk with God without listening to Him. And there is no greater pleasure or joy in life than knowing you have heard His voice and that He is taking you someplace good.

Notes:

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