



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V21 N39 October 6, 2019

“Don’t Let It Go to Voicemail ”

1 Samuel 3:1-10

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

The Holy Spirit

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

“You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.”

Romans 8:9



How should we respond to the voice of God?

Decision making and the behavior that follows from it are complicated. Who knew how complicated given that we do it all the time? It certainly involves our *intellect* (what we know and believe), our *emotions* (how we feel), and our *will* (what we purpose), not to mention the *biology* of sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. Even a simple decision like deciding to eat lunch involves all of these. Let me oversimplify the process. On a given day, I eat at my favorite Mexican restaurant. What is involved in that decision? Knowing it is lunchtime and believing, based on previous experience, that I like the food there plays a part. The fact that my mouth begins to water as I think about the fajitas and at that very same time, my stomach growls in approval also has something to do with it. What’s more, the restaurant is nearby, traffic is light, and I don’t have to turn the car around to get there. The fact that my wife and I enjoy eating there makes me look forward to the sight, sounds, and smell of the place. I am dieting at the time but don’t let that stop me. Seeing a billboard advertisement seals the deal. Fajitas it is!

When it comes to believers in Christ, at least one more thing matters for decision making and the behavior that follows from it – the influence of the Holy Spirit. He dwells in us, and we live our lives under his influence – more or less. I say “more or less” because we may not recognize his influence, or we may recognize it but resist it. According to one classic work on spirituality, the author argues the one who is spiritual must *walk in* (Gal 5:16) and neither *quench* (1Th 5:19) nor *grieve* (Eph 4:30) the Spirit. Addressing them in reverse order, he writes: “True spirituality also depends upon a posi-

tive attitude of reliance upon the presence and power of the indwelling Spirit. The two previously mentioned conditions have been negative in character. They represent things the believer, to be spiritual, must not do. He must not grieve the Spirit by retaining unconfessed any known sin. He must not quench the Spirit by saying ‘no’ to God. The third, and last, condition is positive in character. It is something the believer must do,” namely, walk in the Spirit (Lewis Sperry Chafer, *He that is Spiritual*, 96). All of this presumes that believers are able to recognize the influence of the Spirit in them.

The young lad Samuel didn’t recognize the *audible* voice of God the first time he heard it. How much more do we have trouble recognizing the *inaudible* voice of the Spirit when we, *figuratively* speaking, hear it. This is no doubt true, at least in part, because the Spirit dwells *in us* and his influence is not something we experience from the *outside* but from the *inside*, and *not apart* from the other influences on our decision making. I believe his influence is *integrated* with them. In other words, the influence of the Spirit works together with them – sometimes contributing to and reinforcing their influence, sometimes flying in the face of it. Sometimes his is the dominant influence; sometimes intellect dominates, and he confirms what we believe to be true. For example, he may confirm what we believe to be the case by reminding us what the Scripture says. When we recognize his influence in us – namely recognize his *inaudible* voice – we should like Samuel reply, “Speak, for your servant is listening” (1Sa 2:10). However, we must be discerning enough to know that it’s his voice we hear and not our own.



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

1 Samuel 3:1-10

1 The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

2 One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the LORD, where the ark of God was. 4 Then the LORD called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." 5 And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

6 Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

8 A third time the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. 9 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.

10 The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

READ in another translation

1 Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the LORD by assisting Eli. Now in those days messages from the LORD were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon.

2 One night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God. 4 Suddenly the LORD called out, "Samuel!"

"Yes?" Samuel replied. "What is it?" 5 He got up and ran to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?"

"I didn't call you," Eli replied. "Go back to bed." So he did.

6 Then the LORD called out again, "Samuel!"

Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?"

"I didn't call you, my son," Eli said. "Go back to bed."

7 Samuel did not yet know the LORD because he had never had a message from the LORD before. 8 So the LORD called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?"

Then Eli realized it was the LORD who was calling the boy. 9 So he said to Samuel, "Go and lie down again, and

"Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, 'Speak, LORD, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went back to bed.

10 And the LORD came and called as before, "Samuel! Samuel!"

And Samuel replied, "Speak, your servant is listening." (NLT)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "ministered" in v. 1.
- Circle "rare" in v. 1.
- Bracket "lamp of God" and "house of the Lord" in v. 3.
- Underline "the Lord called" in vv. 4, 6, 8.
- Highlight "speak Lord, for your servant is listening" in v. 9.
- Circle "stood there" in v. 10.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Describe the setting of 1 Samuel 3 in light of verse 1 (cf., Jdg 21:25; 1Sa 2:12-17, 22-25).
2. Briefly describe the major characters in the narrative.
3. Arrange the narrative into scenes and give each one a title.
4. Samuel heard what he thought was Eli's voice. Was he just dreaming?
5. We would not expect him to recognize the Lord's voice. Why not?
6. What do you infer from the fact that young Samuel got up three times *in the night* thinking Eli had called him?
7. Put the meaning of verse 7 in your own words.
8. Why did it take so long for Eli to recognize that the Lord was calling Samuel?
9. What makes what happened in verse 10 so remarkable?
10. **Discussion:** Samuel's response to the voice of God in verse 10 is *archetypal* [an ideal model]. Talk about it

Commentary On The Text

The account of young Samuel's first personal encounter with the LORD is a heartwarming narrative that makes a great children's Bible story – and more. It has been called “one of our most endearing pictures of the great prophet” (Bill T. Arnold, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Samuel*, 80). As a young boy serving in the Lord's house, Samuel is awakened by the sound of a voice he mistakes for Eli's. His submissive spirit and readiness to serve the aging priest is evident in his rapid response to the voice. He doesn't roll over and go back to sleep. Instead he answers, “Here I am.” Then he runs to Eli and says again, “Here I am, you called me.” Eli tells him he didn't call; go back and lie down. Because God had not spoken to Samuel in this way before, the lad didn't recognize the Lord's voice. The third time this happens, Eli recognizes that it's the Lord's voice Samuel is hearing and tells him, “Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, ‘Speak LORD, for your servant is listening.’” Samuel did and the Lord did, but this time Samuel said exactly what Eli told him to say. One commentator observes: “It says much for Samuel's self-discipline that he got up three times in the early hours in response to what he thought was Eli's call. His willing obedience was a qualification for receiving God's word” (Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, TOTC, 63).

This time the Lord not only spoke to Samuel, he stood there and told him what he was about to do to Eli. How remarkable was that in light of the fact that “in those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.” And it wasn't pretty. Verses 11-21 complete the narrative by revealing exactly what the Lord told young Samuel. Because Eli had failed to restrain his evil sons, who scorned God's sacrifice and offering and slept with women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, the Lord would take their lives and put an end to Eli's priesthood. His judgment was irrevocable. The Lord told Samuel, “The guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.” Samuel lay there until morning. When he opened the doors to the Lord's house, he tried to avoid telling Eli what the Lord said. But Eli would have none of it, so

Samuel told him everything. Eli received the bad news graciously; he no doubt saw it coming. From that time on the Lord was with Samuel and over time all Israel recognized Samuel was a true prophet.

As with narratives in general, there are two stories here. The *upper story* is about what God is going to do for Israel. The priesthood is corrupt, and leaders are scarce. But the Lord is going to change that. He is going to bring the dark days of the Judges to an end and give Israel the prophet who will anoint their first king. The *lower story* is about the boy Samuel whose submissive spirit, readiness to serve, and ideal response to the voice of God exemplifies how we, too, are to respond to God's call.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *ministered* “The meaning is most likely that he performed some significant functions around the Tabernacle; perhaps sweeping, keeping wood available for the altar, keeping water handy for drinking and cleaning, and similar activities. Then he apparently was the one to open the ‘doors of the house of the LORD’ in the morning, for he is said to have done this, apparently as a routine function, the morning after that unusual occasion (1 Sam. 3:15). As for dress, he is said to have been ‘girded with a linen ephod’ (1 Sam. 2:18), apparently in the style of the priests themselves (1 Sam. 22:18), though his ephod (like that of the ordinary priests) was not made of the same ornate material as the ephod of the high priest (Exod. 28:6). One may picture the young lad, then, busily engaged around the Tabernacle, clothed in white linen like the regular priests” (Leon Wood, *The Distressing Days of the Judges*, 366).

v. 1 *those days* Samuel was born c. 1100 B.C. Saul became Israel’s first king in 1050 B.C. So “those days” refers to the closing days of the Judges around the time of Samson. In the Hebrew Bible the books of Samuel follow the book of Judges, whereas the book of Ruth is found among the “Writings.” The book of Ruth is placed between Judges and Samuel in our English Bibles because the story takes place “when the judges ruled” (Ru 1:1). “The last chapters of the book of Judges, with their refrain, ‘there was no king in Israel’ (Jdg. 18:1; 19:1; 21:25), prepare the way for new developments in Israel’s leadership. The ‘judges’ had been military as well as judicial leaders, effective in an emergency (though Samson did not fulfill his early promise), but limited by their geographical boundaries and by the nature of their office, for they did not appoint their successor. At times of uncertainty due to external pressure from aggressors, Israel felt the need of a leader who would unite the tribes, have an effective standing army, and be a match for those who led their enemies to victory. It is hardly surprising that there were differences of opinion in Israel as to the propriety of asking for a king when the Lord was their King, and Samuel bore the brunt of the conflict in his capacity as judge, priest and prophet, after the style of Moses” (Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, TOTC, 49, 50).

v. 1 *rare* The meaning of “the word of the LORD was rare” is clarified by what follows, “there were not many visions” during that time. “In the days of Eli, prophetic revelations in the form of

visions and divine words had been ‘rare’ (v. 1; lit., ‘precious’), a circumstance that can be linked to divine displeasure (cf. 14:37; 28:6) and helps explain why society was so degenerate at that time (cf. Prov. 29:18; Amos 8:11)” (Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, NAC, 86).

v. 3 *lamp of* “The reference is to the golden lampstand, which stood opposite the table of the bread of the Presence (Ex 25:31-40) in the Holy Place. It was still night, but the early morning hours were approaching when the flame would grow dim or go out (see Ex 27:20-21; 30:7-8; Lev 24:3-4; 2Ch 13:11; Pr 31:18). For the lamp to be permitted to go out before morning was a violation of the Pentateuchal regulations” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on 1Sa 3:3).

v. 3 *house of* “The opening chapters of 1 Samuel appear to presuppose a semipermanent structure built around the ancient tabernacle. If it were similar to the later temple complex in Jerusalem, it would have included rooms or apartments as part of its outer court for the priests’ quarters. The reference to Samuel’s sleeping in the temple near the ark of the covenant does not mean he is actually sleeping in the Most Holy Place, only that he has a room with the priests, presumably adjacent or near Eli’s quarters” (Bill T. Arnold, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Samuel*, 81).

v. 7 *know* “The boy did not know that it was the LORD because the LORD had never spoken to the boy before” (TEV). Remember, during the period of the Judges God rarely spoke to individuals. During the entire time only two prophets and five revelations are mentioned (see *The NIV Study Bible*, note on 1 Sa 3:1).

v. 9 *speak . . .* Literary critics speak of “archetypes,” which are master images of ideal and unideal experience. Samuel’s response to the Lord’s call is a *verbal* archetype, if you will, of how everyone called of God should respond: “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

v. 10 *stood* This time the LORD not only called to Samuel like before, he also appeared to him as well. “Samuel received both word and vision” (Baldwin, 63). How remarkable was that given the times!

Other Texts to Consider

Galatians 5:16
“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

When the Spirit of God calls, just say, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

What does the Lord’s voice sound like? I’m reminded of 1 Kings 19 when Elijah became afraid for his life and fled to the desert. God was gracious to Elijah by allowing him time to sleep and then sending an angel to strengthen him with food. In His infinite love, God passed by Elijah, giving him the sweetest gift of all, His presence. God’s voice wasn’t a powerful wind, earthquake or raging fire. God’s voice that spoke to Elijah was a “gentle whisper” (1 Kings 19:12). In this week’s passage (1 Samuel 3) God calls Samuel three times before the priest Eli finally understands what’s going on. There’s no denying Eli did many, many things wrong in his leadership, but this one thing he did well. He instructed Samuel and pointed him to the Lord. We are going to make mistakes as parents. Some of them will be huge and some small, but one thing we have an opportunity to do every single day is point our kids to the Lord. How are you training your kids to hear God’s voice? Do you read the Bible with them? Pray with them? Listen to worship music in the car and around the house? When was the last time you shared how God is moving in your life? Let this week be a starting point for your family. Begin with a simple, dedicated prayer time and grow from there. We are praying you hear His gentle whisper this week!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 Samuel 3

1. Who did Samuel think was calling him?
2. How many times did the Lord call Samuel?
3. Why was Eli being judged by the Lord?

What Do You Think?

Why do you think Samuel was afraid to tell Eli about the vision?

What Do You Do?

So much of our prayer time is asking God for things we want. Set your timer for two minutes and be quiet before the Lord. Consider the memory verse as you listen to God.

CORE COMPETENCY: The Holy Spirit

I believe the Holy Spirit helps me become more like God.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 29:4

The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic.

KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week’s verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD’S NAME _____

GRADE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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