

Developing the Prophet Samuel's Keen Ear for the Voice of God

I have spoken elsewhere about the amazing prayer of Hannah that brought Samuel into the world. But even with a godly heritage we still need to journey for ourselves into our relationship with God. J.I. Packer in his great book, *Knowing God*, warns about the danger of only learning things second hand about God. Even though I have Christians in my family tree going back at least into the 1800s I still need to personally build my friendship with Jesus.

I love the story of when Samuel begins to hear the voice of God. It can be a great encouragement for you and me as we learn to hear from God. Here are three things to get you started.

There is an invitation of God for us to listen.

God thinks it is very important for us to have the opportunity to listen to him. God could have made it very hard to hear from Him. But His heart is to be close to us. Actually, the Gospel of John says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (1:14a). God went to great lengths to invite us into conversation. Samuel heard that invitation from God.

God was persistent in His speaking while Samuel was figuring it out.

What a scene it must have been as Samuel ran back and forth to see if Eli was the one calling him. I love God's patience and persistence in this situation. God did not say, "Samuel" once and then say, "I guess he missed it. Time to move on." He didn't give up on Samuel in his season of learning, and He won't give up on you if you keep trying.

We don't have to understand everything for God to speak to us.

It is easy in the process of learning God's voice to get frustrated and give up because everything doesn't make sense. Peter reminds us that even the prophets didn't understand all that God was saying because it was those later who would understand (1 Pet. 1:10-12). So if God speaks to you and it takes a while for you to understand, you're in good company. Samuel just started the process and grew in his relationship over time.

A key takeaway for me from the story of Samuel is how much God will work with us if we are willing to listen. It is His desire for us to hear His voice. It is His desire for that conversation to grow and develop over time. He is just looking for people like Samuel who will say, "Here I am." Will you be one of those people? {eo}

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