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The Lord Speaks

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The Lord Speaks

Abstract

"Does your schedule, your time, your life look like that of a person who wants to hear God's voice? Is there a connection between the amount of distractions in our lives and our inability to hear God?"

Posting about listening to God from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/the-lord-speaks/>

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

The Lord Speaks

 [inallthings.org/the-lord-speaks/](https://allthings.org/the-lord-speaks/)

Liz Moss

We are constantly bombarded by sounds and media. According to [Nielsen's Total Audience Report](#), Americans aged 18 and older spend more than 11 hours a day watching TV, listening to the radio or using smartphones and other electronic devices. And, depending on what's included, [other studies](#) suggest that message and brand "exposure" can range from 3,000 to 20,000 in one day alone. This includes not only ads but labels you see at the grocery store, ads you receive in the mailbox, and cars on the highway. It is easy to be distracted.

[1 Samuel 3:1-19](#) reminds us that the word of the Lord was rare in those days, that visions were not widespread. Perhaps it was because those people, too, were a little distracted. Eli, the priest, had two sons—Hophni and Phinehas. They were what you could call, "Distracted People." Even Scripture calls them scoundrels. They were supposed to be the ones who would take on the priestly duties after Eli would die. Instead, they did whatever they pleased—when people would bring their burnt offerings before the Lord they would ridicule their offerings. They had no regard for the Lord or the duties of the priests to the people. They did not listen. They did not know the Lord. They were distracted.

And, just as Hophni and Phinehas were distracted, the rest of the people were distracted, too. Yet, in their distraction they waited for the new king to arise among them. They needed a king to make them politically and economically strong again. They were waiting for a leader to make their life great again. But, as they waited, they did not listen. They were not silent. They were distracted. So, it turned into a long season of bitter, confused, uncertain waiting.

Hannah, earlier in [1 Samuel](#), was waiting, too. She was barren—without children and without the prospect of children. Through her prayers and obedience to the Lord, the Lord heard her cries and delivered her pain and a son was born. She named him, Samuel. Samuel means "God hears." In her gratitude and obedience, she brought her son—the son she had been waiting for her entire life—to the temple to live there before the Lord. Samuel knew the Lord.

Early in the morning, when Samuel was near age 12, he was lying down in the temple, near the ark of the Lord, and the Lord called him. "Samuel, Samuel"—*God hears, God hears*. Three times the Lord called. Three times Samuel went to Eli, "Here I am, for you called me." But, Eli did not call. After the third time, Eli recognized who it was calling Samuel's name, it was the Lord, the one in whom they had been waiting to hear. So, when the Lord called again, Samuel responded, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Too often, like Samuel, we rush off to do some service, and fail to just sit and listen to the voice of God. A few years ago, my [spiritual director](#) taught me a way to pray with Jesus—to have a conversation with him. It was as simple as this: I would write down in my journal my words to Jesus and then I would simply listen. Whatever I heard I would write that down, too. So, I began to write and I began to listen. And, out of the silence of the room, I began to hear my name being called. "My child, you know that I love you and will not forsake you. Believe in me and I will show you the way."

My writing would continue—my pen nearly unable to stop between thoughts, between breaths. I heard again, "Be silent and believe." I stop but want to know more, to hear my name again. I begin to ask questions, I can't get enough. Time flies by and I continue to write and listen page upon page of my journal.

Scripture passages flood my mind—*Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Be still and know that I am God.*

And, I heard again, "Believe in me. Do not worry. You are okay. I love you. You are mine."

Are you ready to listen?

Samuel says, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” And, he hears the Lord say, “Behold, see, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle.” What God says is none other than judgment upon the house of Eli because of their distracted behavior and their disregard for the Lord. In their distraction of waiting, they completely missed the point and forgot who their God was, and is, and will always be.

Sometimes when the Lord speaks, it may make our ears tingle, too. We hear a call to an obedient life of following Jesus, to take up our cross daily to follow him. We hear the Lord command us to make our lives a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to him. We are called to turn from our sinful ways and to turn back to him. We are told to love our enemies—to even pray for them; and, to love our neighbors no matter who they are. And, we are even commanded to give our money to the poor. Jesus makes it pretty clear that we should follow Jesus and Jesus alone, and that our faith should be like a child’s. We are told to stop gossiping, stop lying, and to stop putting ourselves before others. Sometimes what we hear can be tingling to our ears because it means an obedient life with no more distractions, but a life simply following Jesus.

John Calvin once said, “True knowledge of God is born out of obedience.” We surrender our lives—our hearts, our souls, and our minds—and we hear our names called out of the noise, out of the distractions. “Come, follow me. My love for you is grand. My way for you is great. My life for you is forever.”

Does your schedule, your time, your life look like that of a person who wants to hear God’s voice?

Is there a connection between the amount of distractions in our lives and our inability to hear God?

Do you wish God’s voice would be louder in your life?

Have you spent the same amount of time worrying and talking about your difficult, confusing situations as you have spent in silence, listening to what God might have to say?