

Hearing God

Hearing Tina:

- Be near her
- Remove things that block hearing
- Remove distractions
- Always be listening

Be Near – The foundation of hearing God.

James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.

- We cannot expect to hear from God if we never approach God.
 - But isn't God always here (never leave you nor forsake you)?
 - Omnipresence vs. Manifest Presence. Manifest means to reveal, exhibit, declare plainly
 - **John 14:21** He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and **manifest** Myself to him."

God desires to be with us

- **Psalm 139:17-18** How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! ¹⁸ *If* I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.
 - God desires to spend time with us.
 - God's thoughts are always on us.
 - For some people this is difficult to believe.
- **Psalm 145:18** The LORD *is* near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.
- **Hebrews 4:16** Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Remove things that block hearing

Fear

Not the fear of God. Reverence draws us closer, while fear of punishment or rejection makes us hide.

- **Romans 8:14-15** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."
 - Fear that God won't answer, fear that we aren't worthy, fear that He will punish us instead...

Pride

- **James 4:6** But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."
 - There is no room for an I can do this myself attitude with God.
 - We are created to be dependent on Him.
 - Luke 18 Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector

Shame

- **Romans 8:1-2** *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.
- Adam and Eve hiding – but God coming to them anyway to cover them.

Sin

- **Isaiah 59:1-2** Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden *His* face from you, So that He will not hear.

But what about grace? I thought sin does not separate us from God.

That is true. We are not separated from God. But sin still has a 3-fold effect:

1. It brings shame, which makes us feel separated, like we just talked about
2. It may bring discipline that is needed before it brings answers:
 - a. **Hebrews 12:6-7** *For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.*”⁷ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?
3. It can hinder the blessing that comes with obedience.
 - a. **1 John 3:22** And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.
 - b. Daniel’s smoldering disobedience story

Sometimes I think we may misunderstand grace. In Paul’s day, he worried people would mistake grace for a license to sin.

I don’t have that fear with the people I am around. I truly believe that you do not desire to sin.

But I do worry that people will think that grace is a license for apathy. That grace is an excuse to do nothing, and to coast through the Christian life.

Remove Distractions

Even Jesus had to remove distractions to focus on the Father.

- **Matthew 14:23** And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.

What distracts us? Phones, To Do Lists, Entertainment, etc...

- The Answer
- **Matthew 6:6** But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Luke 10:40-42 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me

to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.” ⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. ⁴² But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

- Even ministry should not distract us from time with the Father

Psalm 46:10 Be still, and know that I *am* God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

Always be listening

1 Thessalonians 5:16-17 Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing

- Prayer is 2-way communication
- Turn your ear towards God

1 Samuel 3:8-11 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. So he arose and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you did call me.” Then Eli perceived that the LORD had called the boy. ⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, ‘Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.’ ” So Samuel went and lay down in his place. ¹⁰ Now the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel answered, “Speak, for Your servant hears.” ¹¹ Then the LORD said to Samuel: “Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle.

As we listen, listen with reverence:

- **Hebrews 10:19** Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest **by the blood of Jesus**,
- God does not come into a place where He is not respected.
- **Psalm 89:7** God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, And to be held in reverence by all *those* around Him.
 - Story of John Bevere meeting Mike Pence and the conference he was at.

- Who are we wanting to hear from? The attitude we come into His presence with says who we are expecting to hear from.
- **Leviticus 10:3** And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.' " So Aaron held his peace.
- Our Father who art in heaven – ***Hallowed be thy Name*** – Reverence

Come Expecting to hear from God

- **Hebrews 11:6** But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
 - Diligently wanting to be close to Him
 - Expect to meet with God

Psalms 17:6 I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God; Incline Your ear to me, *and* hear my speech.

- David asked God to incline His ear to us. Are we inclining ours to Him?

Closing

Keys to hearing God:

Draw near to Him

Remove things that block our hearing

- Sin, fear, pride, shame

Remove Distractions

Always Be Listening

- Come with reverence
- Come with faith

When we started, I talked about how I hear Tina. I didn't learn that overnight. I learned it by being near her. By dealing with the things that came between us. By putting the phone down when she's talking. And by always having an ear turned toward her, even when she isn't saying anything.

After 31 years (really 33), I know her voice. Not because she got louder, but because I got closer.

Jesus said in John 10:27, *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."* Hearing God isn't a skill for a few super-spiritual people. It's what happens in a relationship where we keep drawing near.

So here's where I want to leave us. Samuel didn't recognize God's voice at first. He thought it was Eli. But once he knew who was speaking, his answer was simple: *"Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears."*

Maybe something has been blocking your hearing: sin, shame, fear or pride. Maybe you've just been distracted. Right now, let's lay it down and pray Samuel's prayer together: *"Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears."*