Tending Your Heart Part 2 - Handout

Hindrances to Hearing God

Review - Nature of God's Voice - The Litmus Test

1. They will draw us to Jesus, to see more of His heart, causing us to want to follow and love Him more.
2. His words will never violate but easily align with Scripture. So, the more we know the Bible, the more the Holy Spirit can bring pertinent verses to mind to guide us. The more familiar we are with the heart of God and His ways revealed in Scripture, the more easily we will recognize Him when He speaks.
3. They will reflect the character of the Spirit: loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good and gentle (Galatians 5:22).
4. They will affirm the roles of the Holy Spirit: Helper, Encourager, Comforter, Teacher, Guide, Life-giver, Strengthener, Empowerer, Liberator, Revealer of Truth, Gift-giver.
5. The nature of God's thoughts will be spontaneous and ultimately positive, usually in the first person, such as "I want you to know that I love you, My child."
6. He will never create confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33).
7. He will never bring condemnation or shame on His children (Romans 8:1). While at times there may be a gentle rebuke or correction that will bring conviction, it's the kind of rebuke that produces a longing to come back to Him.

Additional indicators

- His words are light, gentle and easily cut off by imposing our own thoughts or trying too hard to listen. As we trust Him to meet with us and speak to us in any way He chooses, we will always find Him faithful.
- When received, His words bring healing, freedom, transformation and strength to obey, even if it is costly.
- God's voice within us will not eradicate our personality or manner of speech. It may sound like us – our flavor – and so we are tempted to reject it. He is honoring our unique personality.

Activation:

Preparing Your Heart to Hear God

- Meeting God through listening prayer and journaling will probably be the most powerful tool for you to explore the heart of God and your relationship with Him.
- Position your heart: (Matt. 6:6). Ask Him to help you quiet your heart to receive all He has.
- Focus: Ask Him to help you focus.

Follow The Prompts:

- Worship: Praise Him for His desire to speak to you. We enter His gates with thanksgiving and expectancy (Psalm 100:4).
- Surrender your thoughts and desires so you can receive His. “I really want to hear what You have to say, not what I want to hear” - John Eldredge
- Distractions: Write down any distractions that you may need to attend to later.
- Turn off your phone. No email or texting
- Resist the enemy in Jesus” and he must flee (James 4:7). In Jesus name, silence any voices not from Him. Ask for the covering of the blood of Jesus.
- Ask: Simple questions, out loud if possible- speaking it physically can help your heart engage. Unpack what you get – ask more questions, until helpful.
- Listening Journal – record the spontaneous flow without analyzing. As you yield your heart to Him, the spontaneous flow that comes from within you will usually be God speaking to you (Jn.7:37,38).
- In the beginning, you may share your Listening Journal with a mentor or discipler for feedback and to make sure it easily lines up with Scripture.

Hindrances to Hearing God

- Lack of expectancy that God will speak
- Distractions
    - not taking thoughts captive but allowing distractions to rule
    - excessive media, undisciplined mind
    - keeping busy, no inner stillness, not ‘closing door’ (Matthew 6:6).
- Idols
    - holding onto preferences
    - wanting our idol before God (Psalm 106:14-15).
    - not open to receiving whatever He has.
- Intellectual Pride
    - refusal to be childlike and surrender control
    - depending/leaning on my own understanding (Proverbs 3:5)
    - excessive focus on doctrinal argument.
- Lack of obedience
    - refusal to obey and respond to what I do hear.
- Fear of deception
    - making a mistake and deluding myself

    - not trusting God to help me in my weakness. John 7:17; 14:16; 1John 2:27
    - test the spirits (I John 4:1) – ask for confirmation from Him.
- Unbelief, Negative Expectation (Hebrews 3:12 - unbelieving heart) Hebrews 4:7
- Hardness of heart (Hebrews 4.7)
- Lies about God – He can't be trusted - fear of condemnation
- Lies about self – I'm not worthy. I can't hear Him. He is disappointed in me
- Bitterness and Unforgiveness - refusal to forgive those who have wounded us.
- Rebellion - refusal to acknowledge and repent of sin.
- Impure motives - listening to correct others, to prove a point, or to defend choices.

Journaling

- Ask God - and record the spontaneous flow without editing.
- Don't think about what you are hearing at this point - just write what comes. Later, if you have questions about what you wrote, you can talk about it with someone you trust. "In the morning, O Lord, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will prepare [a prayer and a sacrifice] for You and watch and wait [for You to speak to my heart]" (Psalm 5:3 Amplified).

Questions:

- Jesus, what things have I chosen that have hindered me from hearing You?
- What do You want to say about any filters I have used in listening to You?
- Jesus, how do You want to help me overcome?

Receive anything that is encouraging and life-giving by thanking Him for what He said and rejoicing in the truth (loud enough to hear yourself).

Additional Questions:

- Father, when I am discouraged about my choices that keep me from receiving what You say to me, what insight do You that will help me turn my heart to You?
- Why do I choose those things? What do You have to say to me about that? (Remember He never condemns.)
- How can you encourage me to listen to You with more confidence?
- Father, in what areas do I find it hard to trust You?
- What do You want to tell me about Yourself that will help me trust You more?
- Father, how do You want to encourage me right now?
- What do I need to know about who I am to You?
- What do You want to tell me about myself that I need to know right now?

Receive it by declaring and rejoicing in it.