

Essential: The Word of the Lord

Study Guide for Small Group Discussion and Personal Application Lynn
Haven UMC – July 26, 2020 – Pastor Craig Carter

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As our regathering and rebuilding process as a church continues over the summer, we are discussing what is essential to our existence as a congregation. This week we consider how the **Word of the Lord** is essential for life.

Just as we cannot physically exist without food, we cannot spiritually live without the word of the Lord. We need to hear God's voice for guidance, wisdom, knowledge of the truth, and to discern right from wrong. A carefully spoken word can be life-giving, and that is especially true when God is talking. *"People do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord."* (Deuteronomy 8:3b NLT)

Discussion Starters:

⇒ Would you say that God "talks" to you? In what way, how or when? Do you feel as though God does not talk much to you? Would you be interested in hearing from God?

Today we will study to experience of a young boy named Samuel, whose story is recorded in the Old Testament book of I Samuel. We can learn several truths from his experience about the way in which the word of the Lord comes to us. *"Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."* (1 Samuel 3:9b NLT)

1) The Word of the Lord may come to anyone, at any time.

In those days the word of the Lord was rare..." (1 Samuel 3:1b NIV)

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord. The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. (1 Samuel 3:7 NIV)

The Lord speaks through SCRIPTURE – this is the starting point!

The Lord speaks through the HOLY SPIRIT.

The Lord speaks through OTHER PEOPLE.

The Lord speaks through CIRCUMSTANCES.

2) The Word of the Lord is not always what we want to hear.

Then the Lord said to Samuel, "I am about to do a shocking thing in Israel. I am going to carry out all my threats against Eli and his family, from beginning to end. I have warned him that judgment is coming upon his family forever, because his sons are blaspheming God and he hasn't disciplined them." (1 Samuel 3:11-13 NLT)

How to distinguish God's voice (*Listening to God* by Charles Stanley)

CONSISTENT with His Word

CONFLICT with human wisdom

CHALLENGE to our faith

Requires COURAGE

3) The proper response to the Word of the Lord is obedience.

So Samuel told Eli everything; he didn't hold anything back. (1 Samuel 3:18a NLT)

Samuel replied, "What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice..." (1 Samuel 15:22 NLT)

"Why do you call me, 'lord, lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46 NIV)

The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh, and there He revealed Himself to Samuel by the word of the Lord. (1 Samuel 3:21 NIV)

"To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge." (Matthew 13:12 NLT)

Application Questions

⇒ Pastor Craig has argued that the word of the Lord is constantly being spoken and may be heard by anyone, anytime, anywhere. The question is, "Do we have ears to hear?" What do you need to do differently in life so that you hear from the Lord?

⇒ If you have had an experience where you heard a word from the Lord and it required courage, challenged your faith, or you had to make choices about obeying – share this experience and its outcomes with your group.

"Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says..." (Revelation 3:22 NIV)