



Group Lesson 3- Hearing God

Some words appear in different colored font to give extra emphasis, encouraging further meditation.

Hearing God | Luke 10:38-42

Basic Principle: You can hear God through His Word.

A reminder about the methodology used:

Over the past two lessons we have explored Biblical meditation as a concept, and learned how important context is in this process. Each lesson has had a group activity, where people can practice the art of meditation, and a take home portion. The study is only an onramp to the two other activities and should not be separated from them.

Thinking Things Through

1. How does God speak to people? Create a list then discuss what you feel is the best way to hear from God.

Leader -This question may or may not start friendly debate. People see things differently, and you may find that people will be somewhere along a spectrum that stretches from 'God only speaks though his word' to other extremes like 'the Holy Spirit speaks to me through my emotions'. The truth is that there ought to be a healthy balance of learning to listen to the spirit's voice, but firmly rooted within the context of scripture. Therefore, we can safely assume that reading God's word should take place with an expectation to hear from Him, and that we will leave nourished, and an assumption that God will speak to us regularly as we meditate on it. Psalm 1 defines this as a 'blessing'.

Digging Deeper

Have a volunteer read Luke 10:38-39

2. What was Mary doing when it says that she "sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said"?

Leader - Hearing God, like Mary sitting at Jesus' feet to hear the Word, is a picture of submission, surrender, and of waiting patiently.

3. If you were in Mary's position, what might have gone through your mind as you listened? When you encounter God's word today, how do you filter between what are merely your thoughts and impressions are and what God is saying to you?

4. When you read God's word and hear from him, what do you do with what you hear? What do you do to help you remember what you just heard?

Leader - Mary **heard** Jesus' words, as you can. God speaks through your thoughts and impressions. This describes **how** Mary heard Jesus' Word: a. She **heard** b. She **understood**, with **implied obedience** to the Word. Mary was privileged to sit with Jesus' disciples, but Martha was pressuring her to help with the (busyness of life) preparations. Sitting at Jesus' feet is an attitude of reverence, showing a desire to receive. A practical way to do this is to have a journal ready to process the question "What will I do with what I have heard, today?"

Doing Life Together

Read Luke 10:40-41

5. What are some of the day-to-day distractions that detract from quality time with God?

Leader - Martha was burdened down, distracted with much service. Jesus doesn't condemn her hard work, but is gently pointing out that an opportunity to hear from him is far more important than the rest of our busy lives.

6. What are the spiritual distractions in your life that give an appearance of spiritual activity but don't transform you or draw you closer to Jesus?

Leader – Our society is extremely busy, with demands on every minute of our day. Therefore, we often assume that things like attending church, small group, or even personal devotion are enough. However, we can go through these motions day after day with little change in our lives if we do them simply because we are "supposed to", or "its scheduled to". Spiritual growth is the result of the personal discipline of hearing from God, then making changes to how we live as a result.

7. Why did Mary sit and listen, and Martha busy herself with preparations? What is one key reason they did things so differently?

Leader- Mary made a **choice**; this was a priority for her. She had to resist pressure to help with the preparations. She quieted herself and sat and listened with an open mind to what Jesus was saying.

Read Luke 10:41-42

8. What decisions do you need to make if you are to hear from Jesus as you take time to meditate on his word?

Leader- The end result of this study is to learn the discipline of meditation on scripture, and using scripture as a template for praying. This will require a change for many of us.

9. Jesus is giving us great spiritual and emotional insight in verse 42. Identify it and discuss how and why it is beneficial.

Leader- Jesus is promising us that stepping away from the worries and work of life and into a listening posture with him will have much longer impact than the sustenance of a single meal, or the work of a single day. Lasting life change happens when we learn to listen and obey, guided by the words of Jesus.

10. Identify spiritual activity in your life that is “busy work” with little substance. How can you change it to get more from it?

Benefits: Learning to hear Jesus

- Note the example from the interaction between Mary and Jesus as she received her portion of the Word personally. It is rewarding to hear the Lord and receive from Him. Its not out of line to expect it when we read God’s word.
- Revelation remains in your spirit. You do not forget the truths God shows you.
- You receive your portion of the Word for the prayer time. As you meditate, the portion you receive is the basis of your response and prayer.
- You will grow spiritually, become discerning. Mary was the only one privileged to anoint Jesus before His burial. She learned to recognize the voice of God, and was obedient to do what He said. (John 12:3-8)
- Anna and Simeon were others in the right place at the right time to encounter Jesus because they learned to recognize God’s voice and were obedient to it. (Luke 2:25-35 Simeon; Anna v2:36-38)
- Strength for the intercessor. Sitting at Jesus feet hearing and receiving His Word is where you put aside the cares and concerns of the day as you are washed by the Word. Your inner needs are met, strengthening you. (Ephesians 5:26)
- Prayer becomes easy, God has shown you what to pray.

Application: Meditate through the passage. Receive your portion, apply it personally. Pray it out.

Leader- Provided on the next page is a group activity (Putting it into Practice) for you to explore today and a following that a take home walkthrough guide (Life Lessons from Meditation) for your group members to learn to meditate on Psalm 49. Encourage your group to dedicate one day this week to spending time chewing on Psalm 49. You can print it off or email it to them.

Putting it Into Practice

Instructions:

1. Print a copy of the following page for each participant of your group.
2. Review the instructions.
3. Pray that God's spirit would open your hearts and minds to his living Word.
4. Slowly read aloud **Psalm 139**, pausing at the end of each sentence.
5. Remember to ask, "what are we hearing about the promises of God in this passage?"
6. When you get to the end of each sentence or verse allow people to make notes on what God's spirit is impressing on them.
7. After three or four minutes, reread the passage and repeat the exercise, allowing God's spirit to further impress upon your hearts His Truth.
8. Move into a time of prayer, allowing these revelations to inform you on how to pray, as well as applying them towards the things you would normally pray about. (Hint: Repeating the same prayers as others have already prayed ought to be encouraged as the spirit may be nudging people towards agreement)
9. At the end, debrief the experience. How is this different or similar to how you normally pray? What did you learn from this passage that changed how you prayed?

Biblical Meditation is
sitting at Jesus' feet | hearing God through His Word | receiving His Word by faith |
responding, being a doer of the Word | praying out what you received

Biblical Mediation results in
building faith | revelation | heart preparation | healing | strength | relationship |
discipleship

Meditation can be practiced in this way:

- ✚ Use your Bible, read through the passage carefully.
- ✚ Take a silent time meditating on the passage.
- ✚ Go back and reread the passage, be alert, pondering the Word of God.
- ✚ Allow the Holy Spirit to direct you to focus on a portion of the Word.
- ✚ What is God saying to me that I can pray about?
- ✚ How do I apply this to myself? Ask- What does this teach me about the character of God? What does this teach me about His will for my life? How can I apply this to others? Can this passage be reworded as a prayer for people?
- ✚ What is my response to God?

TRY IT OUT - Psalm 139 New International Version (NIV)

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me, and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand— when I awake, I am still with you. If only you, God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!

They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you? I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Prayer

Application: In a prayer group, share briefly to get the full prayer picture of the issue, and to discern what God is saying at this time, then pray out what was received. If by yourself, simply pray out what you received from God during this lesson. Biblical meditation is about drawing our life into God's word, through prayer, not forcing God to conform to our prayer requests.



Life Lessons from Meditation - Psalm 49

TAKE IT HOME

Psalm 49, David's message: If you take time to meditate on God's Word, you can have God's wisdom in your heart and in your mouth.

This is more like a Proverb, preaching good advice available to all men, rich and poor, those with or without influence in this life. David is saying that God's wisdom is available to all who will see it, who will take the time to understand it, and seed it in their heart. Give priority to meditation, it is of great value.

Context is important here as always in meditation.

v1 "Hear this, all peoples; give ear, all inhabitants of the world, v2 both rich and poor together."

v3" My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall give understanding."

This wisdom comes from meditation on God's Word.

v4 "I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will disclose my dark (hidden) sayings on the harp." God's Word is available, precious to some and discounted by others, seen and recognized only by those with eyes to see and ears to hear. What is in plain sight is hidden to the unbeliever.

Singing the Word can also be a form of meditation, praising God and getting the Word inside you.

v5 "Why should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity at my heels surrounds me?" David could be talking about the end of life for worldly people, when they must account for the multitude of their sins. It could be read for any troubled time when evil is called good and many are far from God.

v6 "Those who trust in their wealth and boast in the multitude of their riches, v7 none of them can by any means redeem his brother, not give to God a ransom for him –

There are many things money and influence can not buy, but that salvation gives freely.

v8 For the redemption of their souls is costly, and it shall cease forever – v9 that he should continue to live eternally, and not see the Pit." (not experience corruption in the grave, but experience resurrection)

David is a prophet, here he has prophetic insight that man continues to live eternally, that there is more to life than these few years on earth.

v10 “For he sees wise men die; likewise the fool and the senseless person perish, and leave their wealth to others.”

v11 “Their inner thought is that their houses will last forever, their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.” Cities, monuments, buildings, airports named after men as an honor in this life are often renamed when they are gone.

v12 “Nevertheless man, though in honor does not remain; he is like the beasts that perish.”
Things important in the world are not the things that are important in heaven.

v13 “This is the way of those who are foolish, and of their posterity who approve their sayings.” **Selah** (**Selah** is a music term to pause to consider what is being sung, and in this way applicable to meditation.)

v14 “Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall be consumed in the grave (**Sheol**), far from their dwelling.”

v15 “But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave (Sheol), for He shall receive me.” **Selah** David has revelation that though the body dies, the soul returns to God who made it. It could also prophetically refer to Messiah.

v16,17 “Do not be afraid when one becomes rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dies he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him.”

v18,19 “Though while he lives he blesses himself (For men will praise you when you do well for yourself), he shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.” (the light of eternal life)

v20 “A man who is in honor, yet does not understand is like the beasts that perish.”

This speaks of a man honored in life but having no spiritual understanding.

To the believer the Word of God is a treasure, the Scriptures are like a mine containing precious gold. To the meditator, insight and revelation are precious to be kept in the heart and to be drawn out as wisdom to carry you successfully through this life.

Application: Meditate on this passage and pray out the insights you receive. As you pray for the Church you are touching the believers throughout the world. You will be blessed as part of the Church.

Learn to expand your prayers, your blessings will increase not be diminished. As you give, it will be given to you... As you sow, so shall you reap. (Luke 6:38, Galatians 6:7)