

WHISPER



PARTICIPANTS'
HANDOUTS

REVIEW

What sorts of lies keep us from hearing God's voice? What have those lies been in your life?

Genesis 1:1–5. What did God use to create the world? How does the creation story reveal the power of His voice?

In addition to the lies we may believe, what else keeps us from hearing God speak?

1 Samuel 3:1–10. How did God speak to Samuel? Why do you think Samuel thought he was hearing Eli's voice?

How are knowing God and hearing His voice related? In your experience, how has being close to God helped you hear from Him?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

John 10:1–10. What is the relationship between the sheep and the shepherd? Why do the sheep follow the shepherd's voice?

Why are we able to hear God in the first place? How did Jesus make a way for us to be in relationship with God?

Would you say it's easy or difficult to know when something is from God or not? Why do you think that is?

How are the voices in your life—other than God's—trying to steal, kill, or destroy you? What do they deprive you of?

When have you thought you heard something from God, but it turned out to not be the case? How did you react? What did you learn in the process?

Why do you think we listen to the noises that promise destruction more than the voice of God? What's appealing about those other voices?

1 John 4:1–2. What are some ways you discern whether or not something is from God? How does Scripture play a role in knowing what God has to say?

If we look back to John 10:10, what does Jesus offer in contrast to the destruction of the thief? What does “life to the full” mean? What appeals to you about the full life Jesus has to offer? Why?

As you’ve followed Jesus, how has His voice proven to be trustworthy? How has following His lead been better than going your own way?

What could it look like for you to wholeheartedly listen to Christ this week? What voices would you have to mute? What practices could you put in place to hear Him better?

DEEPER WALK

Select at least one activity below to complete before next week

Read: Read the prologue and chapters 1 and 2 from Mark’s book *Whisper*.

Fight: Choose to fight against the lies that could be deafening you to God’s voice. Write down the lies you believe on 3x5 cards and write the truth of Scripture on the other side. Whenever you’re tempted to believe the lie, read the verse and pray for God’s truth to work in your heart.

Evaluate: Slow down this week and evaluate how well you’re listening to God. What distractions are keeping you from obeying Him? What habits have you developed to keep you aware of Him throughout the day? Pray for God to open your eyes to how you can grow in this area.

Create: Create something that reminds you of God’s voice. Write a poem about God speaking to you, draw what it feels like to be close to God, or use calligraphy to write out one of the verses from this session. Use what you create to remind you that God speaks to you.

Pray: Pray God would use this series to speak to you. Ask Him for an open heart for whatever He wants to say. Pray the same for those who are doing this study with you.

REVIEW

Genesis 28:10–16. How does God reveal His presence to Jacob? Why do you think Jacob was unaware of God's presence in that place before the dream?

When is it easy to be aware of God's presence? When is it difficult? Why do you think that is?

Are there certain places that make you feel more connected with God? Why do you think that is? Have you ever had a place set aside for your time with God? How did God use that place in your life?

Psalms 46:1–11. What does it mean to be still and wonder at the majesty of God? What might it look like for you to slow down and marvel at who God is? What kinds of things keep you from being still and quiet before God?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Luke 4:40–44 and Luke 5:12–16. What happened before Jesus left to pray alone in each of these passages? How do you think Jesus felt after healing many people? Why do you think Jesus took time to withdraw and pray?

How do these passages show the value of rest and solitary prayer to Jesus? What about to us?

What's your attitude toward rest? Do you think of it as selfish? Unnecessary? Essential? Rare? Why do you think you have that perception of rest?

Why do you think we often choose activity over rest? What's difficult about resting?

Do you consider time to alone with God restful? Why or why not?

Luke 6:12–16. Based on this passage, why do you think Jesus spent an entire night alone praying?

What are some of the biggest decisions you've made in your life? How did you make the decision? How was God involved in your decision-making?

When faced with a serious decision, do you seek God's counsel first? Why do you think that is?

What does it look like to ask for and listen to God's guidance? What do you do when you need God to guide you? How might silence and solitude be part of seeking God's counsel?

Luke 22:39–46. Why do you think it was important for Jesus to pray right before His death? How did those prayers prepare Him for what was to come?

How has Jesus's example shaped the way you view solitude with God?

What keeps you from spending time with God? What's one thing you could do this week to spend intentional time alone with Him?

DEEPER WALK

Select at least one activity below to complete before next week.

Read: Read chapter 3 from Mark's book *Whisper*.

Get Alone: Take at least fifteen minutes this week to be completely alone with God. Silence any distractions or noises. Use that time to pray—confess sin, lay down burdens, read a Psalm, thank God, praise Him, listen.

Rest: Develop rhythms of rest this week. Take moments to rest at the beginning and end of each day, set aside a day for Sabbath, or schedule a personal retreat.

Study: Read Psalm 46 this week. Every time you read the psalm, ask why God says to be still and know He is God. Write down what you learn and consider sharing it with a friend.

Pray: Ask God to teach you how to slow down and sit in His presence. Pause throughout your day to pray and remind yourself that He is always with you.

REVIEW

How has Scripture shaped your conversations with God?

In what ways has the truth of Scripture impacted your life? How was God's grace involved?

2 Timothy 3:16–17 and Hebrews 4:12. What do these verses tell us about Scripture? What, then, makes the Bible unique from all other books?

How do you feel about trying to read the whole Bible? Have you read it all before? If so, what did you learn through the process? If not, is there anything that is keeping you from trying it out?

What's your attitude toward Scripture? Do you see it as information to be gathered? As a tool? As a way to get to know God?

How has the Bible helped you grow closer to God? What specific verses encourage you the most? Why do those passages have that effect on you and your relationship with God?

How has the Holy Spirit helped you understand the Bible?

In what ways have you experienced the resurrection power of the Spirit when you've read the Bible?

How, practically, do you "get into God's Word"? How have you experienced God's presence as a result?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Use the following questions to unpack the first chapter of the book of Ruth.

Ruth 1:1–22. What's happening in this passage?

What about this passage was significant to the original audience?

What does this passage teach us about the character of God and humans?

How can you apply the timeless principles from this passage to your life this week?

How did you feel about this style of studying Scripture? How does it compare to other ways you've studied the Bible? What did God teach you through this exercise?

DEEPER WALK

Select at least one activity below to complete before next week.

Read: Read chapters 4 and 5 from Mark's book *Whisper*.

Study: Use the method discussed in this session to study the Bible this week. If you don't know where to start, finish reading the book of Ruth. Read a chapter a day and pray for the Holy Spirit to speak.

Memorize: Pick one of the verses from this session to memorize this week. Write the verse on a card and put it where you'll see it often and practice saying it multiple times a day.

Discuss: Sit down with Christians who are more mature in their faith than you this week. Ask them how Scripture has helped them grow closer to God and how they approach reading the Bible.

Pray: Ask God for a heart for His Word. Every time you open the Bible this week, pray for the Spirit to speak and awaken your heart to hear His voice.

REVIEW

According to Mark, what are the six secondary languages of God?

What are some dangers of not filtering what you think you've heard from God through Scripture?

How has God used your desires to speak to you? What's the difference between desires from God and sinful desires? How can you tell?

What dreams has God given you? How do you discern if a dream is from God or not?

When has God opened or closed a door for you? How did you react? What did you end up doing? How did God use that open or closed door to give you direction?

How have godly people spoken God's truth into your life? How did you receive that truth?

When has the Holy Spirit prompted you to do something? How could you tell it was the Spirit moving in you? How did you feel about His prompting? Did you obey? What did you learn through the process?

How has God used pain to speak to you? What did you learn?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Hebrews 1:1–4. What do these verses say about Jesus?

Is it easy or difficult for you to recognize God's love for you? Why do you think that is? How do you think listening to God and accepting His love for you are related?

John 16:7–15. Why is it better that Jesus went away? Who is the Advocate?

Why do you think God sent the Spirit to us? What does He do? How is the gift of the Holy Spirit an expression of God's love for us?

When have you needed to be guided in truth? How did the Holy Spirit help you in that situation?

Thinking back to the languages of God (Scripture, desires, dreams, doors, people, promptings, pain), how has the Spirit used those languages to speak truth to you?

When you've heard something through the six secondary languages, how has the Spirit helped you discern if those words were from God or not?

What fears, if any, do you have about hearing God's voice? Why do you think you have those fears?

Looking back on this series, how has your attitude toward listening to God changed? What has God taught you through this series? How could you apply what you learned this week?

DEEPER WALK

Select at least one activity below to complete this week.

Read: Finish reading Mark's book *Whisper*.

Reflect: List the seven languages of God on a sheet of paper. Reflect on the ways God has used each of those languages to speak to you and write down what you remember. When you doubt God's voice in your life, use this sheet as an encouragement and a reminder.

Rejoice: Choose a worship song that focuses on how God reveals His love for us through Jesus. Some songs include: *How Deep the Father's Love for Us, At the Cross (Love Ran Red), Jesus Paid It All*. Listen to that song every day to remind you of His love.

Tell: Pick one person—a coworker, your spouse, a friend—and share what you've learned through this series with him or her.

Pray: Thank God for what He's taught you through this series. Thank Him for His love and ask that He would use you to show others His love this week.