"Stop Talking Start Listening"

John 10:1-27

STRENGTH for the Journey with Joe Stowell

Part of the RBC family of Ministries

Individual Study Introduction

After listening to the audio segment, use the following questions as your time allows. You may want to record your answers or jot down thoughts and notes in a personal journal. You may also want to use your journal as a record of your prayer time with God. Write out your prayer or simply record your requests and the areas of your life you are releasing to God. This written record will help you to watch God's movement in your life. You'll see more clearly the ways God is giving you "strength for the journey"!

Getting Started:

Joe Stowell admits that he is a horrible listener. For example, it isn't uncommon for Joe's wife to ask, "Have you heard anything that I've said?!"

- How often does your spouse or another person close to you protest, "Have you heard anything that I've said?!"

- On a scale of 1 (stone deaf) to 10 (all ears), how would you rate yourself as a listener?

Strength through Scripture:

Read John 10:1-18.

1. How much time do you spend listening to God in comparison to talking to Him?

2. Joe contends that there are two common reasons why Christians don't feel God ever speaks to them: (1) They don't know they have the equipment to hear His voice personally. (2) They simply aren't listening to His voice. Which of the two is more of a problem for you?

3. Joe notes that John 10 begins with a note of danger. What is that danger in terms of Jesus' sheep metaphor?

Notes:

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."
John 10:27

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4. What is that danger in terms of spiritual warfare (see Ephesians 6:10-12)?

5. Joe states that the first of five habits of effective listeners to God is that they embrace an awareness of the clear and present danger in their environment. Do you agree with Joe that the voices around you, by and large, are dangerous voices?

Digging Deeper:

If you have enough time, answer one or more of these optional questions. But be sure to save time for the final two sections.

1. What do you think of Joe's claim that listening to the voice of God is the most important thing we do in our Christian lives?

2. How hard is it for you to believe that the Bible's statement that we wrestle not against flesh and blood means that our conflicts are really not about our spouse, boss, kids, and so on?

3. After Joe told the story about his childhood friend Bobby getting hit by a car, he said, "I'm really getting tired of hearing the thud in a lot of my Christian friends' lives." How can you relate?

Strength through Reflection:

1. When was the last time you heard the voice of God personally in your life?

2. We read in 1 Peter 5:8 that the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. What has been Satan's most recent strategy to "devour" you?

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Strength through Prayer:

Spend a few moments in prayer. Thank God for the privilege of entering His sheepfold by the door of the Shepherd—the one who said, "I am the way, the truth, the life." Tell God that you really want to value listening to His voice.

You may want to begin your prayer with these words:

"Dear God, I know that You spoke the world into existence and that Jesus spoke to the wind and waves. You spoke to Adam and Eve and Moses and Jonah; and Jesus taught the masses on the hills and spoke intimately to His disciples. Thank You for wanting to speak to me—and that Jesus knows my name. Lord, I realize that I live in a dangerous environment. I pray that I will always listen to Your voice; I don't want to be another thud on the street of Satan's traffic."

Closing Call to Action:

We need to be listening for the voice of God, because we live in a dangerous environment.
Any time you hear voices in your life in the coming days, stop and listen for the voice of God. And then do what He tells you to do.

Notes:

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