



Learning to Listen For God's Whisper

In a culture that is always running and striving, a real challenge of the Christian life is constant distraction! Being "super busy" is worn like a badge of honor and a gauge of our importance. If God speaks to us in a still, small voice, can we hear Him above the "noise" of daily life?

1 - A world of comparison! - *It's very easy to focus outward and compare our possessions, accomplishments, and relationships to those of others around us. When do you most feel this temptation? It's said that "comparison is the thief of joy". Is there truth in this phrase?*

2 - Watch the Video for Week 7 with Pastor Scott

3 - Read & Discuss the story of Elijah -

- **Israel's sin of idolatry** - The stories in 1 & 2 Kings record how the people of Israel & Judah slowly lost their fellowship with God by being swayed to give allegiance to other gods. Baal and Asherah were the Phoenician deities that controlled weather patterns and fertility of crops and families. Those were really important factors in the survival of families! It was tempting to worship the gods of your neighbors just to make sure you were covered. In this sense, idolatry was not just religious, but also quite practical!
 - *Does this still impact us in ways that our attention and allegiance are distracted from the one true God?*
- **Elijah sees God's victory over Baal & Asherah** - Elijah confronts King Ahab and Israel's sin of idolatry by setting up a confrontation on Mt. Carmel. (*The story is in 1 Kings 18:16-39 if there is time, or read later on your own*). After this victory, Elijah hears that Queen Jezebel wants him dead, and he is terrified!
 - *Why do times of victory or success give openings for temptation?*
- **Read 1 Kings 19:1-4** - Elijah runs for his life and is overwhelmed by despair and isolation! The wilderness represents a place of testing, refining, and revelation in the presence of God (*i.e. Moses, Hagar, Jesus*).
- **Read 1 Kings 19:5-9** - Instead of chastising Elijah for lack of faith, God responds with grace and provision, drawing Elijah into a personal encounter.
- **Read 1 Kings 19:9-14** - Elijah has a 2-part encounter with God, first with the "word of the Lord" who ushers him into the very presence of Yahweh. "The word of the Lord" is frequently used to indicate the activity of the pre-incarnate presence of Jesus!
 - *When anxiety and despair rise in us, how can shift focus to God's provision and the invitation to hear His voice in a new way?*
 - *Why does God reveal Himself to Elijah in the way He does?*
 - *He asks Elijah, "why are you here?" - God wants us to enter His presence and honestly share our burdens, concerns, and fears!*

• **Pray for each other! Share any "Elijah battles" you may be facing!**



From victory to retreat!

Mt. Carmel in northern Israel is a 450-500 mile journey to Mt. Sinai in modern-day Egypt. Elijah traveled the distance over 40 days and nights to the site where Moses met with God in Exodus 3 & 33, and also gave His commandments to Israel in Exodus 19

