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Introduction

1. The ***Hearing God Group Discussion Guide*** is based on EBC’s Six-Part Sermon Series: ***Hearing God***.
2. To get the most out of this series, we are asking our EBC family to:
 - a. Listen to the weekly teaching on what Scripture says about hearing and conversing with God.
 - b. Participate in the practicum session connected to each teaching and put into practice the various aspects of hearing and conversing with God. (NOTE: Time will be given to complete this exercise during the evening.)
 - c. Engage with the weekly take home section designed to help our EBC family grow in our practice of hearing and conversing with God
3. NOTE: Each practicum builds upon the previous session’s practicum, so that the entire Hearing God Journey guides us into a progressively growing relationship with God through the application of hearing God in all aspects of life.
4. The following outlines the progression of hearing God practicums and homework exercises:
 - Session 1: Simple question and conversation
 - Session 2: Meditation question and conversation
 - Session 3: “SMORP” question and conversation
 - Session 4: Command question and conversation
 - Session 5: Guidance question and conversation
5. We strongly encourage all participants to bring a notebook to begin a journal. This will be introduced in Session 1. Your notebook will be used when completing the practicums and homework exercises of all the sessions.

Session 1: Does God Still Speak Today?

REVIEW: *Three Reasons Why It Is Critical God's Children Hear His Voice*

A. We need to hear God to understand the Bible.

"We can't and won't fully understand scripture apart from hearing the Holy Spirit."

John 14:26 (NIV) *But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

- God has given us his Spirit to teach us **everything** we need to know.
- Scripture can't be properly understood apart from the **revealing ministry** of the Holy Spirit. (Lk. 10:21)
- Jesus said the secrets of the kingdom cannot be **discovered** by human intelligence or education alone. (Jn. 5:38-39)
- Remember that the leading Bible scholars of Jesus' day had the Old Testament, and yet they failed to recognize Messiah when He came!
- There are times when our thinking is **faulty**, and God needs to **adjust** it.
- If God has never **corrected** your theology or doctrine in anything, perhaps you haven't been listening!

B. Scripture teaches that God is still speaking.

"There is revelation besides the Bible."

1Co 13:8-10, 12 (NIV) *But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears...12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

- Although, Cessationists use 1 Cor. 13 to support their claim that God doesn't speak apart from the Bible, yet this passage actually says the very opposite!
- The speaking gifts will cease at Christ's second coming, when we know **fully**!
- The Bible speaks often of a personal (*Rhema*) word from the Lord. (Eph. 1:17; 1 Cor. 14:26; Acts 13:2; Gal. 2:1-2)
- God will never give us a personal (*Rhema*) word that contradicts his Holy (*Logos*) word.

C. God expects us to know and obey his voice.

John 10:2-3, 27 (NIV) *The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.*

- Hearing God's voice is one of the most **foundational practices** of the Christian life.
- It is impossible to truly **know** and **follow** God without hearing his voice.
- The fact that someone doesn't hear God means that they haven't learned to recognize his voice, not that God doesn't speak to people today. (1 Samuel 3)

PRACTICUM: Simple Question and Conversation

Exercise 1: Answer the following questions:

- When you made the decision to follow Jesus, what happened in you that made you think or feel that you needed to do that? How did you know? How could you tell that He came into your life?
- Has there been a time when a Bible verse jumped off the page at you, or seemed to be directed at a particular situation or circumstance you were going through? Write down your experience.
- Have you ever been reading Scripture when suddenly a thought came to you that helped you understand that passage in a way you hadn't understood it before? Explain.
- Have you ever heard a sermon that really seemed to be directed right at you? Explain.
- Have you ever felt a prompting, a nudge or an urgency to do, or not to do something? Explain.
- Are there other ways in which God has spoken to you? Dreams? Visions? Audible voice? Other?

If you answered any of these six questions, you have already heard God, and it proves what the Bible said: "My sheep hear my voice!" (Not will hear. They already do!)

Group Discussion: Take a moment to share ONE of these briefly with someone next to you

Exercise 2: The "Simple Question" listening prayer exercise

First: Thanksgiving & Praise

- The way to enter God's presence is through praise
- **Psalm 100:4 (ESV)** *Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!*
- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you something He wants you to be grateful for and why.

- Then begin to praise and thank Him from a heart of deep gratefulness
- Write it out (journal it)

Second: Ask a question

- “What do you like about me? Why? Or ...
- “What do you see when you look at me?”

Third: Write down the thoughts that come (journal it)

- Write “G:” (for God)
- Then put your pen on the paper & write the 1st thing that comes to your mind
- Do not wrestle with whose thoughts they are – just write the thoughts down
- Do NOT reject positive things He may want to say to you. Accept them by FAITH!
- Keep writing as long as you get thoughts - don’t stop!

Fourth: Respond (journal it)

- Next, print your first initial on the next line & write out your response to God
- The conversation would look like this:
 YOU: Begin with a question
 GOD: Be quiet (listen) and write down the thoughts
 YOU: Respond to the thoughts you receive, addressing them to the Lord
 GOD: Be quiet (listen) and write down further thoughts that come to you.

Group Discussion:

- Briefly share with another person something you received.
- Take a moment to pray for each other to grow in hearing God’s voice this week.

HOMEWORK:

1. Begin a Devotional Journal
2. Each day:
 - a. Write down the date.
 - b. Next, begin your session by thanking God for something, such as what He did for you the day before.
 - c. Then follow your praise portion with a prayer conversation.
 - d. Of course, you may also wish to note other things in your journal as well, such as what He taught you, or what He did for you or any other thing that may be noteworthy to you.
3. Example of journaling:

September 2021

Y: Lord, thank you for a wonderful rest you gave me this night. Thank you for what you did for me yesterday. Thank you for answering my prayer and calming my anxieties and fears.

Y: Is there any sin you wish to reveal to me that I need to confess and forsake?

G: Yes. You spend too much time watching TV.

Y: Lord, why is that a sin in your eyes?

G: Because instead of spending time reading your Bible, praying, reading helpful books or serving me, you waste your time on something that will not help you eternally.

Y Lord, now I understand the gravity of this. I confess this as a sin and ask you to forgive me.

G: You are forgiven!

AND SO ON ...

4. From the list below, choose one question each day, from which to begin a conversation:
 - a. What do you like about me?
 - b. What do you see when you look at me?
 - c. What sin do you want me to reveal to me?
 - d. When and for how long do you want me to meet with you each day?
 - e. How do you want me to structure my life?
 - f. Is there anything that keeps me from full surrender to you?
 - g. What things do you want me to pray for myself? My marriage? My family?
5. Next week we'll do a listening exercise as we read the Bible. We aren't using our bible this week so that you realize, you can hear from God even when you are not reading your Bible. There will be many times in your day, you don't have your bible, but that shouldn't stop you from listening for God to speak!
6. If you prefer, you can even ask the Holy Spirit in prayer to bring you a question to your mind. When you receive an idea, write it down. Then listen in prayer and write out your conversation with God in your Devotional/Prayer Journal.
7. Next week I'll ask you to share something you got from your homework assignment.
8. As you're reading your Bibles from now on, **mark HG** (Hearing God) every time you come across a verse where God is speaking, or in which someone is hearing in some way or another.

NOTES:

1. Do this in place of your devotions for the duration of this seminar
2. Spend at least 30 min per day in your listening prayer exercises - more if you can
3. **Bring your Hearing God Booklet & Bible** back with you next week. You'll need them.