



Bible Study—Episode 1: “Listen” with Hannah Meyer

This accompaniment Bible study was created to be used after listening to each podcast episode. Each episode has a Bible story and questions that can be used with any age group.

Bible Text: 1 Samuel 3:1–10 (NRSV)

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.

Then the LORD called, “Samuel! Samuel!” and he said, “Here I am!”

and ran to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.”

But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down.

The LORD called again, “Samuel!” Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.”

Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.”

Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy.

Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’”

So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

Framing the Story for the Group

You might introduce it like this: “This story begins by telling us that ‘the word of the Lord was rare.’ Sometimes the church struggles not because God is silent, but because we aren’t listening in the right places. In this story, God speaks through a young person—and the future depends on whether the adults are willing to listen.”

Why This Story Matters for Listening to Youth

- God speaks when leadership is tired and vision is dim.
- The young person hears God first.
- The adult has to learn how to listen in a new way.
- The future of the community depends on paying attention.

This is not a story about Samuel “growing into” leadership—it’s about God already speaking *through* him.

God’s Word comes to us through means we do not control—including young people. Listening to youth is not charity or strategy; it’s faithfulness.

Discussion Questions

Noticing the Story

1. What details stand out to you in this story?
2. Why do you think God calls Samuel instead of Eli?
3. What does Eli get wrong at first? What does he get right eventually?

Youth-Focused Reflection

1. Have you ever felt like God—or truth—was speaking to you, but adults didn’t hear it?
2. What helps you trust that your voice matters?
3. If God were calling today, where do you think youth might be hearing it first?

Adult-Focused Reflection

1. Where might our “vision be dim” as a church?

2. How might adults unintentionally block youth voices—even with good intentions?
3. What does it take for Eli to shift from authority to accompaniment?

Shared Reflection

1. Who are the Samuels in our congregation right now?
2. Who are the Elis—and what might they need to unlearn?
3. What practices could help us say together: *“Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening”*?

Prayer

God of whispered callings, you spoke to the child Samuel in the quiet of the night, reminding us that your voice is not limited by age. Forgive us when we fail to listen to young people or assume wisdom must come from someone older. Teach us to make space, like Eli, and to trust that you are already speaking through our youth. Open the ears of your church. Give young people the courage to speak and give all of us humility to listen. Help us to say together, “Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening.” Amen.