

**A Study of the Heart Week 4**  
**Samuel: The listening heart becomes a fruitful heart**

**Review:**

Everyone lives for some kind of treasure.

Whatever you treasure will control your heart.

Whatever controls your heart will control your behavior.

If lasting change is going to take place, it must take place through the heart.

How are you guarding/keeping your heart?

1 Samuel 1 – A desperate heart becomes a dependent heart.

1 Samuel 2 – A complacent heart becomes a compromising heart.

<b>The listening heart is a Word receiving heart. 1 Samuel 3:1-9</b>
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1. Israel rejected God's Word over and over again. God was judging them by giving them what they wanted: No word. You can hear the Word but not listen to it and receive it.

- Eli's eyesight had become dim. He was a living parable of what happens when a person hardens his heart to God's word. He had very little wisdom and insight but the lamp did not go out completely.
- Can we have God's Word in our hands and sit under teaching and preaching but hear little from it? We have selective hearing and often need to go back to the place of departure from Him. The Pharisees were post-graduate level religious studies students who heard nothing from God. Has listening to God's Word become rare to you? Have you hardened your heart to the Lord? Pray that He would give you ears to hear. Speak to me Lord!

2. Samuel did not call God. God called Samuel. However, Samuel put himself in position to listen.

- Prayer, study, Bible reading, memorization, meditation
- You can be a student of the Scripture and not receive it but you can't receive it, without being a student of His Word.

**The listening heart is a responding heart. 1 Samuel 3:10-14**

1. Samuel responded in obedience. That is how you know that you have listened and received God's Word.
  - James 1:21-25.
2. Samuel is a contrast to Eli who heard God's Word but did not listen and receive it.

**The listening-responding heart is a Word revealing heart. 1 Samuel 3:15-18**

1. Samuel is given hard words by God, but he is still obedient to speak them. He did not hold back.
  - Samuel identified himself with the Word to the point that Israel considered Samuel's word equal to God's Word.
  - He became a mouthpiece of God.
  - Hebrews 4:12, 13
2. Do not take God's word lightly.
  - God's word is weightier than the heavens and the earth and will outlast them. Martin Luther
  - Read and meditate on selections of Psalm 119

**The listening heart produces a changed life. 1 Samuel 3:19-21**

1. The Lord was with Samuel.
  - 2 Timothy 3:16, 17
  - Romans 12:1, 2
2. The Lord let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground.

What great hope comes from this promise in Jeremiah 31:33, 34 fulfilled in Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit!

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS WEEK 4**  
**March 10, 2010**

**Group Discussion:**

Have you ever been accused by your spouse or others of having “selective hearing”?  
Do you think you have “selective hearing” with God?

Are you regularly putting yourself in a position to hear and listen to God through His Word? Is a word from Him rare in your life?

How do you prepare to hear God’s Word preached? (See Larger Catechism question 160 below after you have discussed this question)

Are you currently experiencing the nearness of God or does he feel far away?  
Describe what His nearness to you has looked like in the past.  
If He feels far away, what do you think might be the cause?

Close in prayer for one another.

**Personal Reflection:**

Are there places in your heart that you have allowed to “harden” God?  
If so, what are they? What is God calling you to do about them?

How does simple obedience factor into your day-to-day choices at this time?  
Would you say your life is spiritually complex or one of simple trust?  
Do you see your heart softening to the desires God has for you?  
Have you deepened in your understanding of the needs of others around you,  
particularly your spouse and children?

**Q. 160. What is required of those that hear the Word preached?**

A. It is required of those that hear the Word preached, that they attend upon it with diligence<sup>1</sup>, preparation<sup>2</sup>, and prayer<sup>3</sup>; examine what they hear by the Scriptures; receive the truth with faith<sup>4</sup>, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the Word of God; meditate, and confer of it; hide it in their hearts, and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.

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<sup>1</sup> Prov. 8.34

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet 2.1-2; Luke 8.18

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 119:18; Eph. 6:18-19

<sup>4</sup> Hebrews 4:2