



# The Big Questions

Summer sermon series



## John 10:2-4 (NIV)

The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep <sup>3</sup> ... **and the sheep listen to his voice.** He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out <sup>4</sup> ... and his sheep follow him **because they know his voice.**

# How do we recognize and know God's voice?

1. Ask & Pray (1 Sam 3:8-9, James 1:5)

## 1 Samuel 3:8-9 (NIV)

Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy.<sup>9</sup> So Eli told Samuel, “Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, **‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’**”

## **James 1:5-7 (NIV)**

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

# How do we recognize and know God's voice?

1. Ask & Pray (1 Sam 3:8-9, James 1:5)
2. Study the Word (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

## **2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NIV)**

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

# **Prayer/Reflection Exercise**

1. Read scripture (a couple times)
2. Meditate/Silent Reflection on Scripture
3. Journal a prayer about it



## Hebrews 4:12 (NIV)

12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it **judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.**

# How do we recognize and know God's voice?

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2. Study the Word (2 Timothy 3:16–17)
3. Follow the Holy Spirit's Leading (John 16:13, Rom. 8:14)

## **John 16:13a (NIV)**

**But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you  
into all the truth.**

## **Romans 8:14 (NIV)**

For those who are led by the Spirit of God  
are the children of God.

## John 4:1 (NIV)

“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, **but test the spirits** to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

# Questions to ask ourselves if a random thought pops into our heads

- Does this thought or inclination lead us to become more like Christ?
- Will dwelling on this thought produce more of the fruit of the Spirit in me?
- Are the promptings confusing or vague? God is not the author of confusion.
- Do the thoughts go against God's Word? God will not contradict Himself.

# Questions to ask ourselves if a random thought pops into our heads

- Will following these promptings lead to sin?
- Is this thought false to Christ-honoring love for others?
- Is this thought false to purity?
- Is this thought serving to make sin attractive and to make holiness unattractive?

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4. Seek Godly Counsel (Proverbs 15:22)



# Proverbs 15:22 (NIV)

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

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# Satan's thoughts

- His thoughts will always appeal to the flesh, the eyes, or to our pride.
- Satan takes advantage of those who do not forgive.
- Involves Temptation and Accusation
- Includes Deception

# Satan's Voice

- Rush you (James 4:7)
- Push you (Genesis 3:13)
- Frighten you (1 Peter 5:8)
- Confuse you (Genesis 3:4-5)
- Discourage you (2 Corinthians 11:3)
- Worry you (1 John 3:8)
- Steal, kill, and destroy you and others (John 10:10)

# God's Voice

- Comforts you (Isaiah 51:11)
- Protects you (Psalm 121:7)
- Helps you (Psalm 115:11)
- Convicts, but then provides freedom. (John 16:13, John 16:7-8; 2 Corinthians 3:17)
- Leads you (Isaiah 30:21)
- Stills you (Psalm 29:11)
- Is consistent and steady, never contradicting (John 16:13)
- Propels us to take action (Psalm 143:10; Galatians 5:16)

# **When we are most vulnerable**

1. **When we are living in disobedience (Ephesians 2:2, John 12-13)**

## Ephesians 2:2 (NLT)

You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.

## **John 13:2 (NIV)**

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.



## John 12:6 (NIV)

He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because **he was a thief**; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

*We don't know exactly how Satan interacts with our own sinful nature to do his ugly work. But I think it is fair to say that our own sinfulness is like an invitation, like a welcome mat and an open door to Satan.*

*John Piper*

## Ephesians 4:26-27 (NIV)

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and give **no opportunity to the devil.**

# **When we are most vulnerable**

1. When we are living in disobedience (Ephesians 2:2, John 12-13)
2. When our proximity to God decreases

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# Only God's Sheep Know Him

- John 10:14 (NIV) I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and **my sheep know me.**
- John 10:27 (NIV) My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and **they follow me.**

## John 10:25 (NIV)

Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father’s name testify about me, 26 but you do not believe because **you are not my sheep.**

## Revelation 3:20 (NIV)

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.



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