

## WEEK FIVE - LOOK/LISTEN

### Devotion:

"We show how little we love God by preferring to listen to His servants only. We like to listen to personal testimonies, but we do not desire that God Himself should speak to us. Why are we so terrified lest God should speak to us. Because we know that if God does speak, either the thing must be done or we must tell God we will not obey Him."

~ Oswald Chambers "*My Utmost for His Highest*"

"God is like the sun; you cannot look at it, but without it, you cannot look at anything else."

~ Gilbert K. Chesterton

God has spoken to us through the divinely inspired and inerrant words in the Bible. We find God revealed to us in these words. We find His love, His grace and His mercy in the words of the Bible. However, do we believe this is the only time God speaks to us? As we read God's word and meditate on Him, we LISTEN for Him to speak to us and LOOK for His work in our lives.

Oswald Chambers poses a valid question that hits at the core of our lack of understanding. Are we afraid to listen to and look for God because we are terrified that we would have to make a stand? If we truly listen to and look for God we must then either obey as we confess that we believe that God is Almighty or we must turn and run from God and make not only ourselves out to be a liar but call God a liar too. How am I calling God a liar? If we run from God and do not obey Him we are then claiming that all of the Bible is invalid. We are making a statement that we believe in ourselves more than we believe in God. This removes God from the seat of authority in our lives and makes us proud rather than humble as we discussed in week one. This fails to follow the first commandment where we are called to fear, love and trust in God above all things.

Listening to and looking for God in all places emphasizes our belief that God can and will speak to us. Yes, there are people placed in roles of authority that are speaking, teaching, and preaching God's word to us but if we only believe that God is found in these people do we truly believe that the Holy Spirit is sent to dwell within each one of us. Listening to God when we study His word or when we are in prayer is vital to our faith especially as we confess and proclaim a living, breathing, and speaking God. Looking for God can be done by enjoying His creation and the love that is experienced in the means of grace that He has given us. The challenge placed before us is: Do we obey the calling of God or do we choose our own wants and needs above the will of God?



## WEEK FIVE - LOOK/LISTEN

### Discussion:

Read 2 Kings 17

Why were the Israelites carried away? Why were lions sent among the people? How do these verses apply to us today?

By not obeying God, we are not trusting Him and acting against our professed faith in Him. This is a sinful act. In the same way the Israelites experienced punishment, so to our neglecting the word of God and failing to obey Him has consequences. If we listen to and look for God's will he promises to bless us, protect us, care for us, and ultimately bring us into His presence when Christ returns.

Matthew 7:7-8

Ask, Seek, Knock. All actions that we are called to do but in this same vein we must be willing to listen/look for answers from God.

What is something that you have been asking God that you are afraid to have answered?

In what ways can I quiet myself in order to listen to and look for God more intently?

What do you think about the idea that if we don't look to God we can't look at anything else?

We are called to look for God and to listen to His will, yet often we are too afraid to truly seek Him. Remember that humility before God places our life at the foot of the cross begging Him to use us for His will.

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### Prayer:

Prince of Peace, Bring peace into our hearts so that we may listen to and look for your answer to our prayers. Speak your truth into our lives so that we may know your will. Humble us so that when you speak into our lives, we follow your will without hesitation and thus trust you in all that we do. Thank you for giving us your word and sending us the Holy Spirit so that you may be with us at all times. Thank you for the gift of your Son and life in His name. Amen

## WEEK FIVE - LOOK/LISTEN

### Day One:

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#### Read:

My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. – **Proverbs 2:1-6**

#### Examine/Apply:

As I have meditated on and sought insight from God, I must also listen to His word and look for His guidance. How can I incline my ear to listen for God's wisdom?

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Are there people that God has placed in my life for me to turn to when I am seeking understanding? If so, do I trust them when I am seeking understanding?

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Being a part of a community of believers is vital to growth and strengthening of faith.

How can I become an intentional part of the community of believers at Immanuel and be strengthened by others as I seek understanding?

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#### Pray:

Lord Jesus, You speak to us in so many ways. I pray that You open my ears to hearing your word and listening for your voice. Help me to be strengthened by your people as I desire to grow closer to you. Amen.

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## WEEK FIVE - LOOK/LISTEN

### Day Two:

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#### Read:

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. – **John 6:63**

#### Examine/Apply:

Do I listen to my own wants, needs, and desires more often than God?

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Do I believe that the words Christ has spoken truly bring me life?

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How can I be more attentive to ignoring my selfish desires and heeding the Spirit's call on my life?

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Regardless of what I want or how far I stray from God's will, Jesus assures me that it is not my own actions that give life but what He has said and done for me that saves.

#### Pray:

O what a precious gift it is to be given new life in you. I know that your words are life and salvation comes from you alone. Protect me from myself and help me look to you at all times so that I may dwell in your presence for eternity. Amen.

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## WEEK FIVE - LOOK/LISTEN

### Day Three:

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#### Read:

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. – **Romans 8:26-27**

#### Examine/Apply:

Why does the Spirit intercede for me before God?

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Is looking and listening for God in my life impacted by the Spirit interceding for me?

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As my heart fails to seek God's will, the Spirit guides me back to hear the voice of the Father.

What a blessing it is to have a Helper that helps in my weakness.

#### Pray:

Almighty God, You have sent your Spirit to intercede for me in my times of weakness. Remove my selfish wants and desires that get in the way of your glorious work being done in and through me. Use me as you see fit to glorify your name and silence my fears so that I may be attentive to your word in my life. Amen.

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## WEEK FIVE - LOOK/LISTEN

### Day Four:

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#### Read:

“A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.” As he said these things, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, he said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’ Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

– Luke 8:9-15

#### Examine/Apply:

Am I the good soil? Do I hear God’s word and hold it fast so that I may bear fruit with patience?  
Or am I quick to pick and choose what I want to believe like the other soils?

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Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away. – Luke 8:18

#### Pray:

Gracious Lord, you have sown your word into my heart and into my soul. I need your help in being good soil. I need your help to hold fast to your word and trust in you. I need your help to bear fruit. Make my heart listen to your word and instruct me to be patient so that my life becomes pleasing to you for the sake of Jesus. Amen.

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## WEEK FIVE - LOOK/LISTEN

### Day Five:

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#### Read:

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. – **Ephesians 5:15-17**

#### Examine/Apply:

Paul states that part of looking for God is being mindful of my walk.

Am I being mindful of my walk and how my actions are perceived by those around me?

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Does my life reflect my looking for and listening to the will of God or am I being foolish in my actions and leading others astray?

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I am called to be a witness to the people around me and if I am unwise in my walk, I fall short of the opportunity to be like Christ to those around me.

#### Pray:

Wise Father, I need your daily wisdom to penetrate my life. I long for the day when I walk wisely in understanding your will. I pray that you would reveal your will for my life as I listen and look for you. Thank you for the gift of your Son and the gift of the Bible for teaching me your ways.

Amen.

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## WEEK FIVE - LOOK/LISTEN

### Recap:

Looking and listening patiently for God to reveal His will is difficult in our busy world today. The previous four weeks have focused our lives more intently on being in a place of stillness before God. Looking and listening is always a part of the Christian life as we try to be obedient to God's plan for our life. Obedience is not a word that is used lightly nor is it something that is a request. Yes, we are saved by grace and given salvation freely but Jesus emphasizes obedience not because we have to but because we love Him and want to abide in Him. Looking and Listening for God's will and striving for understanding is a good step towards being obedient to Him.

In what ways have I put the daily reflections into practice?

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In what ways do I struggle being obedient to God's will?

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Looking and Listening are so challenging when I do not shut out my own wants and desires.

How can I purposefully set aside my thoughts and wishes to dwell in God's presence?

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**HUMLED(D)**  
BY GRACE