



RECOGNIZING HIS VOICE
IN A WORLD FULL OF NOISE

HEARING GOD

THANK YOU

Thank you for leading a *Hearing God* Small Group!

God is a communicator. He wants to speak to us. But many people struggle to hear His voice. This study will examine the common ways God speaks to us: through His Word, through the Holy Spirit, through trusted voices, through our conscience and inner witness, and through events in our life.

Through this study, the people in your Small Group will cultivate a deeper capacity to hear from God. Your role, as a Small Group Leader, is vital. As you lead, our prayer is that God would use you and fill you every step of the way.

To help you on your journey, we've provided you with this Leader Guide. It has everything you need to lead your group each week. If you need anything else during the course of the study, please reach out. Our team is here to help!

The Small Groups Team
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**KEYS
FOR
SUCCESS**

HOW TO USE YOUR LEADER GUIDE

Your *Hearing God* Leader Guide has everything you need to lead a successful Small Group. Each week of your guide contains two parts.

PART 1: PREPARING FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

Review this section early in the week to help prepare for your next Small Group meeting. It includes points on:

- **What to Communicate**
- **What to Pray**
- **What to Expect**

PART 2: LEADING YOUR SMALL GROUP

Use this section to lead your Small Group meetings. Read through the section in advance so you can be prepared. As you read, make notes in the margins and select the questions and prayer points you would like to cover. This section includes:

WARM-UP AND INTRODUCTION

Begin each week by discussing an easy warm-up question and then reading a short introduction to help focus everyone's attention on the topic of the lesson.

SMALL GROUP VIDEO

Each week includes a video to play during your Small Group. In these videos, Pastor Jeff and Brandy explore new aspects of each topic and help kick off your discussion. You'll want to preview the video each week to familiarize yourself with the content. If your group meets in a public setting, encourage everyone to watch the videos on their own before you meet.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

This section provides questions for your Small Group to discuss. The questions are also included in the *Hearing God* participant guide. Encourage your group to work through the questions on their own. This will create the richest discussion during your group time. But it's okay if people don't answer the questions ahead of time—the discussion will still be great!

Finally, don't feel pressured to discuss every question. Select the ones that seem most appropriate for your group, and give everyone plenty of time to share their thoughts. If you don't get through all the questions, that's okay.

PRAYER

Praying together is one of the greatest privileges of a Small Group. This section will give you prayer points to help focus your group's prayer time. Also, use this time to take prayer requests and pray for each other's needs.

HOW TO LEAD A GREAT SMALL GROUP

The next six weeks in your Small Group will be incredible! Here are some practical tips to help you lead a great group.

1 PRAY

It may sound obvious, but praying for your group is the best thing you can do. Your Leader Guide provides prayer points each week to help focus your prayers. Remember, your prayers don't have to be long. Just try to be consistent and watch what God does!

2 PREPARE

Preparation is key to a successful group. Consider the following:

- **Always communicate with your group before and after you meet.** Follow the points in your Leader Guide to know exactly what to communicate every week.
- **Make sure your meeting location is clean and tidy.** If you're meeting in a home, play soft worship music in the background while people arrive. Providing snacks is also great. If you have pets, be sure they are out of the way.
- **Get others involved.** Don't do everything yourself. Ask your group to help organize and bring snacks each week.

Bringing snacks will create a sense of “ownership” in the group. Remember, someone who signs up to bring a snack is more likely to show up for the group. Look for other ways to involve your Small Group. Can someone bring a fun ice-breaker question next week? Can someone send out prayer requests to the group? Can someone plan a fun outing? The more you involve your group, the more committed they will be.

- **Read through your Leader Guide and review the discussion questions each week before you meet.** This will help you familiarize yourself with the content and give you the chance to select the questions that will be most helpful for your group.

3 FOLLOW A SCHEDULE

Following a consistent schedule each week is important. Try not to let the group run long. Here is a simple 75-minute schedule you could follow:

- **Meet, Greet, Mingle** (*15 minutes*)
- **Warm-Up and Introduction** (*5 minutes*)
- **Discussion** (*45 minutes*)
- **Prayer** (*10 minutes*)

4 FACILITATE, DON'T TEACH

Your goal as a Small Group Leader is to facilitate a great discussion and draw out the contribution of others. A successful group is one where every person shares. As a facilitator, aim for an 80/20 ratio—where 80% of the talking is done by group members and only 20% by you.

SMALL GROUP VALUES

The following values will help set the commitment level and expectations for your Small Group. Please take time during your first meeting to discuss these values as a group and commit to follow them.

VALUE

COMMITMENT

Group Attendance

We commit to prioritizing our Small Group by attending every week and communicating if we will be absent or late.

Safe Environment

We commit to listen to each other and support one another without judgment.

Spiritual Health

We commit to allowing the members of our Small Group to speak into our lives and encourage us to live according to God's principles.

Building Relationships

We commit to contribute to our time together as a Small Group and get to know each other. We will pray for each other regularly and support each other through life's ups and downs.

**WEEKLY
SMALL
GROUP
GUIDES**



WEEK ONE

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS WORD

PREPARING FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

Your Small Group kicks off this week! Focus on fostering connection.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

- Contact everyone in your Small Group a few days before the group starts to remind them of the key details (day, time, location, childcare, etc.).
- Let everyone know you are praying for them and you're excited for the group to begin.
- Tell everyone to read Week 1 of *Hearing God* before your group meets, so you can discuss it. If someone doesn't read the chapter, that's okay, but reading ahead of time will provide the best discussion.
- If anyone wants to go an extra step, encourage them to answer the discussion questions at the end of each chapter. This will help people process the content and prepare for the Small Group discussion, but this step is completely optional.

WHAT TO PRAY

- Pray that God would bring the people to your group that He wants there. Trust His hand in forming your group.
- Pray that everyone would feel comfortable and that friendships would begin to form at your first meeting.
- As you've stepped out to lead a Small Group, pray and believe that the Holy Spirit will be with you and will help you.



WHAT TO EXPECT

The first week of your Small Group is always exciting! If you have a new group, you might not know who will show up. Contacting each person beforehand is a great practice. Some people may be joining a Small Group for the first time. If so, they might feel nervous or excited.

Plan on spending 10-20 minutes breaking the ice with everyone. Have snacks ready when people arrive and spend time getting to know each other. Setting out name tags for everyone is also a good idea. Before you start the Small Group discussion, go around the room and have everyone share a little bit about themselves (name, family, job, hobbies or interests, etc.).

Prepare a couple of fun ice-breaker questions that everyone can answer. These questions should be fun, easy to answer, and help people connect. Spend extra time this week getting to know each other, even if it shortens your discussion.

LEADING YOUR SMALL GROUP

WEEK 1

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS WORD

WARM-UP

Who would you describe as someone that God speaks to? Why did you pick this person?

INTRO

Most people know someone they would describe as being close to God—someone God speaks to. But God wants to speak to everyone! Today, we will look at the prophet Samuel and the first time God spoke to him. From his story, we'll discuss how God speaks to us today.

SMALL GROUP VIDEO - WEEK 1

Visit milestonechurch.com/hearinggod

DISCUSSION

1. Have you ever felt God speak to you before? What was it like?
2. **Read 1 Samuel 3:8-10.** Why do you think God repeatedly calls out to Samuel?
3. Samuel's response in verse 10 is so simple. What does his response teach us about hearing from God?
4. How can we position ourselves to hear God's voice more?



5. One of the ways we hear from God is by reading the Bible. Why are commitment and discipline necessary to read God's Word?
6. The purpose of reading the Bible is relational not informational. How does this affect the way you read your Bible?
7. Do you have a regular time and place to hear from God? Explain.
8. What are the benefits of having a set time and place to hear from God?

APPLICATION

What is something you will do this week to position yourself to hear from God more?

PRAYER

- Pray for everyone to follow their plan to hear from God this week.
- Ask God to speak to everyone as they dedicate time to hear from Him.
- Take prayer requests and pray for the needs of the group.



WEEK TWO

**GOD
SPEAKS
THROUGH
PATTERNS &
PRINCIPLES
IN HIS WORD**

PREPARING FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

Your second week is all about continuing to make connections in your group.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

- Follow up personally with each person who came to your group (text, phone call, or personal email). Thank them for coming and invite them back for Week 2. This is the most important thing you can do this week.
- If anyone missed the group, be sure to reach out and see if they need anything.
- Send out prayer requests to the group.
- Encourage everyone to read Week 2 of *Hearing God*.

WHAT TO PRAY

- Pray that everyone would come back for Week 2.
- Pray for any prayer requests that were mentioned at your first meeting. Be sure to reach out to anyone this week who had a prayer request and check in on them.
- Pray for each person in your Small Group to grow in their desire to study God's Word.



WHAT TO EXPECT

You have the first week wrapped up! Follow up personally with everyone in your Small Group, and you should have a good idea of who will be at the next meeting. You might have some new faces, so plan a fun ice-breaker question again to kick things off and help everyone get to know each other better. Spend time laughing and snacking. At this point in your group, connecting is still your number one goal.

Speaking of snacking, remember that you don't have to provide snacks yourself every week. Instead, ask the people in your group to sign up each week to bring something. This does more than lighten your load. It gets everyone in the group involved. Plus, people who sign up, show up!

LEADING YOUR SMALL GROUP



WEEK 2

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH PATTERNS & PRINCIPLES IN HIS WORD

WARM-UP

Tell us about a time you had to make a tough decision and didn't know what to do. What happened?

INTRO

Wouldn't it be nice if the Bible addressed every question and every decision we had to make in life? Unfortunately, it doesn't. What it does, however, is vital. The Bible reveals God's character and nature to us. It invites us into a relationship with Him. And it shows us how to live. Today, we will talk about what God's Word does for us when we study it.

SMALL GROUP VIDEO - WEEK 2

Visit milestonechurch.com/hearinggod

DISCUSSION

1. **Read 2 Timothy 3:16.** According to this verse, what is the Bible useful for? Write down all four concepts Paul mentions. Then discuss how the Bible accomplishes each of these concepts.
2. **Read 2 Timothy 3:17.** According to this verse, what is the outcome of studying God's Word?



3. How does the Bible equip us for “every good work”? What does that mean?
4. Why is knowing the big story of the Bible important? How well do you know that story?
5. The purpose of God’s Word is to reveal God’s character and nature to us and to invite us into a relationship with Him. How does knowing this affect how you read the Bible?
6. Last week, we talked about having a set time and place to read God’s Word. What should that time look like? What does it look like for you when you study the Bible?
7. Use the S.O.A.P. method to study a passage of Scripture.

S.O.A.P. METHOD

S - SCRIPTURE

Read James 1:22-25.

O - OBSERVATION

What observations can you make from the text?

(see next page for examples)

Here are some observations you can use to help lead the discussion:

Verse 22

- God wants us to obey the Word, not just hear or study it.
- If we do not obey the Word, we deceive ourselves.
- What would it mean to deceive yourself?

Verses 23-24

- James compares someone who does not obey the Word to a person who forgets what he or she looks like. That would be ridiculous!
- Notice the word "immediately." What we have read doesn't stick with us.
- How often do we read the Bible or hear a sermon, then immediately forget what we have learned or fail to put it into practice?

Verse 25

- The "perfect law of freedom" refers to the commands of Jesus in the New Testament, as opposed to the Old Testament Law, which did not bring freedom.
- James emphasizes obedience again.
- We should not forget what God's Word says. We should obey it.
- What's the result of obedience? God's blessing!



A - APPLICATION

How can you apply these verses to your life?

Here are some application points you could use to help guide the discussion:

- God wants us to study His Word, but it is not enough simply to study the Word, we must obey what it says.
- When we obey God's Word, His blessings follow.
- Are there any areas of your life that are not aligned with God's Word? What are they?

P - PRAYER

Go around the group and have each person say a one-sentence prayer, reflecting on something from James 1:22-25. This will be a powerful moment for your group. It might be someone's first time to pray out loud. If so, encourage them and celebrate this moment together.

APPLICATION

What is something you will do this week to study and understand God's Word more?

PRAYER

- Pray for everyone to become students of God's Word and to grow in their knowledge of who He is.
- Pray for God to reveal Himself more as you study His Word this week.
- Take prayer requests and pray for the needs of the group.



WEEK THREE

**GOD
SPEAKS
THROUGH
THE HOLY
SPIRIT**

PREPARING FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

Continue to focus on making connections while diving deeper into the discussion.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

- Follow up with everyone in your group again to thank them for coming.
- Send out prayer requests to the group.
- If anyone missed the group, be sure to reach out and see if they need anything.
- Encourage everyone to read Week 3 of *Hearing God*.

WHAT TO PRAY

- Pray for any prayer requests that were mentioned at your last meeting.
- Continue praying for your group to hear from God as they work through the study.
- Pray for every person in your group to seek the Holy Spirit and grow in their relationship with Him.

WHAT TO EXPECT

At this point, you should notice your group feeling more comfortable with each other and opening up more. Friendships should start forming, and you might find people hanging out for a while after your Small Group ends. This is a good thing! Capitalize on the deepening friendships this week when discussing the content.



LEADING YOUR SMALL GROUP



WEEK 3

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

WARM-UP

The first two weeks of this study have focused on God's Word. Has God spoken to you through His Word recently? What has He shown you?

INTRO

We've been talking about how God speaks to us through His Word. Today, we're going to shift gears and talk about the role of the Holy Spirit in hearing from God. Jesus promised to send us the Holy Spirit and that He would lead us into all truth. Today, let's talk about the Holy Spirit's role in helping us hear from God.

SMALL GROUP VIDEO - WEEK 3

Visit milestonechurch.com/hearinggod

DISCUSSION

1. **Read John 14:16-17a.** How does Jesus describe the Holy Spirit in these verses? What do you think these terms mean?
2. According to these verses, why did Jesus say He would send the Holy Spirit? Why is this important?
3. How often do you ask the Holy Spirit to help you or be with you? Explain.

4. **Read John 14:26.** What does Jesus say the Holy Spirit will do for us? Why is this important when hearing from God?
5. How does the Holy Spirit illuminate God's Word to us today?
6. The Holy Spirit wants to speak, but we have to be willing to listen and to obey what He says. Why is obedience tied to hearing from God?
7. Is there something God has told you to do recently? If so, what is it, and are you obeying what He said?
8. **Read Luke 11:13.** Are you in the habit of asking the Holy Spirit to speak to you? Explain.

APPLICATION

What is something you will do this week to hear the Holy Spirit more?

PRAYER

- Thank God for sending us the Holy Spirit to be with us and to teach us.
- Pray for everyone in your group to seek the Holy Spirit more this week, and to hear His voice.
- Take prayer requests and pray for the needs of the group.



WEEK FOUR

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH TRUSTED VOICES

PREPARING FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

You're halfway done! Begin to focus on one-on-one connections.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

- Send out prayer requests to the group.
- If anyone missed the group, be sure to reach out and see if they need anything.
- Encourage everyone to read Week 4 of *Hearing God*.

WHAT TO PRAY

- Pray for any prayer requests that were mentioned at your last meeting.
- As you begin the last half of the *Hearing God* study, pray that people would open up even more during your group, and that the friendships would grow even deeper.
- Pray that your Small Group would become a place of trusted voices to help each other hear from God.

WHAT TO EXPECT

You're already halfway through the study! At this point, it's a good idea to start connecting with each person in your Small Group one-on-one. Meet for coffee, grab a bite, or hang out after church. As a Small Group Leader, you want to make a personal connection with everyone in the group and help them take their next step in their walk with God. As you do, the second half of the study will go even deeper. Remember, people will enjoy the discussion in your Small Group, but it's the connections that keep them coming back.



LEADING YOUR SMALL GROUP



WEEK 4

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH TRUSTED VOICES

WARM-UP

Name some of the voices clamoring for our attention today. Are these voices good or bad?

INTRO

We're bombarded every day with hundreds of voices, shouting their opinions at us. It can be hard to hear from God. Thankfully, God has given us help. Through the church, we are surrounded with trusted voices we can turn to for advice and guidance. Today, let's talk about the different voices in our lives, and how they can help us hear from God.

SMALL GROUP VIDEO - WEEK 4

Visit milestonechurch.com/hearinggod

DISCUSSION

1. Why is it important to consider the source of the voices we listen to?
2. **Read Proverbs 12:15.** What does this verse tell you about foolishness?
3. Why do we have a tendency to use confirmation bias to make poor decisions?

4. Have you ever used confirmation bias to make a bad decision in the past? Explain.
5. According to Proverbs 12:15, what is the solution to making poor choices?
6. Whose advice should we listen to? How do you determine if someone is a good person from whom to seek advice? What should be the criteria?
7. Look at the list of five bullet points on page 102. Who in your life fits this list (or comes relatively close)?
8. Is there a decision you are trying to make, or an issue you need wisdom handling? What is it?

APPLICATION

Who are the strongest voices in your life? Do you need to make any changes to the voices you listen to?

PRAYER

- Pray for everyone to grow deeper in the good relationships God has placed in their lives.
- Pray that your Small Group would become a trusted place where people can ask questions and help each other through life's challenges.
- Take prayer requests and pray for the needs of the group.



WEEK FIVE

**GOD SPEAKS
THROUGH
OUR
CONSCIENCE/
INNER
WITNESS**

PREPARING FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

There are only two weeks left. It's time to start looking ahead.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

- Send out prayer requests to the group.
- If anyone missed the group, be sure to reach out and see if they need anything.
- Encourage everyone to read Week 5 of *Hearing God*.

WHAT TO PRAY

- Pray for any prayer requests that were mentioned at your last meeting.
- Pray for your group's next steps after *Hearing God* ends, and that everyone would be excited to continue meeting.
- Pray for each person in your group to grow in their ability to hear and recognize God's voice for themselves.

WHAT TO EXPECT

With only two weeks left, it's time to start looking ahead. What will your Small Group do after *Hearing God* ends? Begin talking to your group about your next steps:

- 1 Plan something fun to do together.
- 2 Pick your next study.



Coaching Tip: When you talk to your group about next steps, have an idea of what you want to do. Discuss it with your group, and they will follow your lead.

Speaking of next steps, as you pray for the people in your group, ask God, "What is *each person's* next step?" Maybe someone needs to get baptized. Maybe someone needs to start serving. Maybe someone should start co-leading the Small Group with you. The list is endless. Spend time thinking about the people in your group and praying for God to give them their next step. Remember, people grow as they take steps.

LEADING YOUR SMALL GROUP

WEEK 5

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH OUR CONSCIENCE/ INNER WITNESS

WARM-UP

What's an early memory of your conscience telling you something was right or wrong?

INTRO

God has given everyone a conscience, an inner-voice to help guide them. But like everything else, we have to develop our conscience and our ability to hear from God clearly. Today, we are going to talk about how to sense when God is speaking to your conscience and how to grow in this area.

SMALL GROUP VIDEO - WEEK 5

Visit milestonechurch.com/hearinggod

DISCUSSION

1. How would you describe the voice of your conscience?
2. Is our conscience always right? How do we know when we can trust it?
3. The Bible teaches that your conscience can become "seared" through deception and disobedience (1 Timothy 4:2). What do you think it means to have a seared conscience? How would that affect someone?



4. In what ways can you help your conscience become more sensitive to God's voice?
5. Page 123 talks about how your conscience is a part of your personality. This can affect how you sense God speaking to you. For example:

"Some people get a directional word from their conscience. Others may see a picture that helps them think about it from a different perspective. Some people's imaginations create a movie in their mind as if they can see what will happen if they follow or ignore their conscience. Other people simply know what they're supposed to do through a strong feeling."

Have you ever felt God speak to you in one of these ways? Does God speak to you more often in one particular way than the others?

6. We need to develop both our incoming and outgoing channels of communication with God. How would you describe the difference between those two channels?
7. Do you struggle more with the incoming channel or the outgoing? Explain.

APPLICATION

Has God already been trying to say something to you through an inner witness? If so, what is it, and what should you do?

PRAYER

- Pray for anyone who responded to the application question above.
- Pray for everyone to cultivate their ability to hear and discern God's voice better.
- Take prayer requests and pray for the needs of the group.



WEEK SIX

**GOD
SPEAKS
THROUGH
EVENTS IN
OUR LIVES**

PREPARING FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

*Congratulations, it's the last week!
Take time to reflect on the study and to finalize your next steps.*

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

- Send out prayer requests to the group.
- If anyone missed the group, be sure to reach out and see if they need anything.
- Encourage everyone to read Week 6 of *Hearing God*.
- Remind everyone about your group's next steps:
 1. What's your plan to do something fun?
 2. What's your next study?

If you haven't finalized these plans, you can this week.

WHAT TO PRAY

- Pray for any prayer requests that were mentioned at your last meeting.
- Pray for your group's next steps and that everyone would be excited!
- Thank God for the people in your Small Group and the growth that everyone has experienced.
- Pray for each person to continue hearing God's voice every day.



WHAT TO EXPECT

Congratulations on finishing the study! Spend time celebrating with your group this week. Your final meeting should have a sense of excitement and fulfillment. Relationships have formed and grown. Spend time reflecting on the study. Ask everyone to share something God has done in them over the past 6 weeks. If you haven't finalized your next steps with the group, be sure to do that this week. Plan something fun together, and pick your next study.

You've been praying for each person in your group to take their next step in their relationship with God. Begin meeting with the people in your group one-on-one to help determine their next step, and encourage them to take it. This is the best thing you can do as a Small Group leader to help people grow.

LEADING YOUR SMALL GROUP

WEEK 6

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH EVENTS IN OUR LIFE

WARM-UP

We're in the last week of our study on *Hearing God*. What has been your greatest takeaway so far?

INTRO

God is a communicator. He wants to speak to us. So far in our study, we've looked at how God speaks to us through His Word, through the Holy Spirit, through trusted voices, and through our own conscience and inner thoughts. Today, we will look at a final way God speaks to us: through our circumstances.

SMALL GROUP VIDEO - WEEK 6

Visit milestonechurch.com/hearinggod

DISCUSSION

1. There are two extremes regarding how we view circumstances. One extreme is to think God doesn't use circumstances to speak to us at all, and the other extreme is to think that every circumstance is a message from God. Do you tend to lean one way or the other? Explain.
2. **Read Acts 16:6-10.** According to these verses, how was God working through Paul's circumstances?
3. Why would God use circumstances to try to get our attention?



4. Do you think God still uses circumstances today to speak to us? Explain.
5. Have you ever felt like God was using a certain situation to get your attention or to tell you something? What was it?
6. How can we know if God is trying to speak to us through a particular circumstance?
7. Whenever you find yourself in a significant life event or circumstance, why is it helpful to reflect on God's goodness and faithfulness in the past?
8. Looking at all the ways God speaks to us—through His Word, through the Holy Spirit, through trusted voices, through our conscience, and through circumstances—which is the most important? Why?

APPLICATION

Is there a challenge or situation you're facing that God might be using to speak to you? If so, what is it, and what could He be saying?

PRAYER

- Pray for anyone who responded to the application question above.
- Pray for everyone to hear God's voice more clearly every day.
- Take prayer requests and pray for the needs of the group.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations on finishing *Hearing God!*

We hope the study was beneficial and that everyone in your Small Group grew in their capacity to hear from God. We also hope that God moved in your life as you poured into others.

For your next study, check out the additional resources available at resources.milestonechurch.com.

Thank you for leading a Small Group!

