

How Do You Hear?
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Introduction: We will often need to test our foundations.

- A. The influence of culture will pull many away from simply *hearing and doing* God's will. This can affect how the culture views the church.
 - 1. How many articles have been written to "help" churches from losing members by becoming more "relevant?" *Should we listen?* What is your foundation?
 - 2. Local churches need to *hear only one voice*. (Rev 2:7, 17, 29)
- B. We can over time change *our attitude towards God and His word*. (Heb 2:1)
 - 1. All religious groups and be classified by *who they hear and how they hear*.
 - 2. Jesus' disciples will be characterized by this very truth. (Jn 10:3-6)
 - 3. How today would God describe our hearing?

I. God has always chosen to work with men by a hearing, learning process

- A. Jesus often pointed this out in His ministry. (Jn 6:44, 45; 12:48-50)
 - 1. God's fruits come from *teaching the delivered words of God*.
 - 2. How was Cornelius saved? Look at the efforts to have a preacher teach him. (Acts 11:14; Rom 10:17)
- B. Why do men fail to hear with understanding God's word?
 - 1. This is ultimately determined by *the condition of each one's heart*. (Lk 8:15)
 - 2. The Bible shows us how the struggle to hear is won or lost.

II. Why do men have difficulty hearing God's word?

- A. They have based their life on *their desires*. (Jn 8:43-44)
 - 1. Hearing depends upon *the intention to learn and obey*.
 - 2. *The heart is easily deceived* to believe what you wish to be true. (Ex. Politics)
 - 3. Only when we are humbled and *really want the truth* can we be helped. (Rom 8:5)
- B. They have *rejected reason for emotion*. (Deut 29:18-19)

1. Consider what one professor has to do with his class! (Teaching how to think)
"But true to stereotype, I increasingly find that most of them cannot think, don't know very much, and are enslaved to their appetites and feelings. Their minds are held hostage in a prison fashioned by elite culture and their undergraduate professors. They cannot learn until their minds are freed from that prison. ...Many of them were quick to dismiss unfamiliar ideas as "classist" and "racist," and thus unable to engage with those ideas on the merits." Undoing the Dis-Education of Millennials - Adam J. MacLeod

- 2. We cannot escape *the need for reason and discernment*.
- 3. Can we handle an alleged contradiction? A character attack? Our own confusion?
- 4. Consider the effort and reason that was needed to believe in Jesus. (Mt 16:13-15)
- 5. Consider a few examples in the book of John. (Jn 1:46; 6:60, 66; 10:19-21)
- C. They have *become proud*.
 - 1. Many have made themselves their own God. (Ezk 3:5-7)
 - 2. Over time *a heart can turn and be hardened*. The ability to hear is now lost.
 - 3. This is the true division point in the church over generations. Who are *serious* about hearing and doing God's will? Israel lost that desire! (2 Kgs 18:11-12)

III. King Saul lost the ability to hear God's word

- A. He began as *a humble servant of God*. (1 Sam 9:17)
1. He humbly served his father and sought godly council. (1 Sam 9:6)
 2. There was no arrogance in him when he was presented to Israel. (1 Sam 10:22)
 3. He would instill a powerful faith in his son Jonathan!
- B. He began to care what the people thought *more than what God said*.
1. God made provisions to *keep a king from doing this!* (Deut 17:18-20)
 2. What might have happened? Was he busy? Did he read with a heart to learn?
 3. We must *choose to place ourselves before God*. Hearing and worship is work!
 4. If he sought to please the people then *what will he seek?* (1 Sam 8:5-8)
- C. He lost *a reverence for God's way*.
1. God plainly taught that *only a priest can make a sacrifice*.
 2. He thought the circumstances justified a different path. (1 Sam 13:9-12)
 3. What do you think? God wishes *to teach us how to think*. (1 Sam 13:13-14)
- D. He fully *gives in to pleasing the people*. (1 Sam 15:3, 9)
1. Worldly men would *say that Saul was obedient to God!* How much did he do?
 2. His mind is so distorted that he even tries to convince Samuel that he obeyed. Consider some popular arguments used today. (1 Sam 15:13-16)
 3. He lost a love for God and the ability to think. (1 Sam 15:10-11)
 4. Saul never again finds true repentance. (1 Sam 15:22-23)
 5. Saul becomes so bad that *Samuel avoids him* for the rest of his life.

IV. The Apostles learned to hear God's word

- A. Jesus found His disciples as *first the disciples of John*. (Jn 1:36-37, 40)
1. Imagine *the time and effort* they had spent being taught by John.
 2. Where does this kind of desire for teaching *come from?* What direction are churches taking today, more or less teaching?
 3. Jesus immediately challenges them to think!
- B. The Apostles *made many mistakes*.
1. James and John had a bad temper. (Lk 9:54-56)
 2. There were times where they failed to cast out a demon. (Mt 17:15-17)
 3. Every time they are rebuked *they seek to listen, learn and grow!* (Mt 17:19-21)
 4. They listened! How *should we respond* when we hear a warning from God? (Mt 26:21-22)
 5. How do we respond when rebuked or warned?
- C. These Apostles did a work that *became our foundation*. (Eph 2:20)
1. How shall we "do church?" *What was delivered?* (1 Cor 11:23-24)
 2. Those that hear with reverence *take God's choices seriously*. What should I do when I have a practice that was not delivered by the Apostles?
 3. What voice will we hear today? (1 Jn 4:4-6; 1 Cor 11:18; 1 Jn 2:19)
 4. "Can you hear me now?"

Conclusion: Let us listen to God just like Habakkuk did! (Hab 2:1, 20)