THROUGH OLD TESTAMENT EYES: LISTEN AND LEARN

This is the beginning of a series of studies that surround the core practices of Engedi: CABLE. And we will discover these principles through the narratives of the Old Testament. This teaching starts with the principle of Listening to God’s voice and learning from His Word.

Read Numbers 13 and 14

One might first ask themselves, “what does it mean to hear from God” after reading this passage, but there is a deeper core and strength behind this section in Numbers. The great value in this passage is found in 13.1—“The Lord said...”

Throughout scripture we see God creating and renewing through speaking, whether into the lives of people as in Genesis 12 and Exodus 3 or into the formless void as in Genesis 1 or John 1. We begin to see in this story of the 12 spies that the only way this land has been made possible was through the Lord’s speaking and provision guiding and directing them along the way. This direction and speaking from God which had delivered the Israelites from Egypt is the same word that is speaking today providing direction and renewal, along with deliverance.

When God speaks, new things are made possible.

God is in the business of making things new. God is creating something new for His believers and followers.

It is important to remember that God’s clearest and most consistent way of speaking is through scripture. We can see this in the ways Jesus spoke and quoted passages from the Torah when He was on the earth. The power of the scriptures has been modeled by Christ’s own life.

Second Timothy 3.16–17 states:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God’s people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Yet there are often times that scripture may be challenged due to a number of objections:

IS THIS REAL AND TRUSTWORTHY?

Throughout time, Jesus has been renowned as one of the greatest teachers of all time. This comes from non-Christian sources as well. And if Jesus is claiming such power and truth in Scripture (the Torah at the time), it stands to reason that its power still stands.

QUESTION: What are some of the internal struggles you have with scripture? How do you wrestle with those questions?

IS IT CULTURALLY RELEVANT?

Sometimes what seems to us to be culturally regressive in the Bible is not nearly what it seems on surface. There are many lessons in scripture that can only reach their full
potential through deep study. Slavery can be used as a solid example. Passages that refer to slavery are actually speaking into a historical difference. Slavery was not the same as we have come to know it over the past 200 years.

**QUESTION:** Where have you encountered scriptural differences from cultural standards? How and where can you study these deeper for a fuller understanding?

**HOW CAN IT SAY SUCH OFFENSIVE THINGS?**

A common struggle with scripture may sound something like this: "How could a loving God do this?" or "I can't agree with that because I feel ________." When someone says you can't trust the Bible because there are some ideas in it that offend them, what are they assuming? They assume that if there is a God, He'll never have any views that upset you. Does that really make sense? Or is it more likely that God will challenge some of our ways of thinking?

**QUESTION:** In deeper analysis, have you ever disagreed with God because you felt something should be done a certain way? How does this differ from claiming that you know a better way to handle something than?

So, we can move forward to ask ourselves, how can we take hold of the fruit that scripture promises to produce? We first must realize if we don't listen to what God has said, we will not yield the fruit that we are designed to produce.

**QUESTION:** Why didn't Moses and his people listen to God's promise? Were they afraid? Did they miss something? Have you ever refused God's direction? What was at the heart of that decision?

At the core of their disobedience, they did not believe God. It seems so elementary at times to claim a statement like this. "Moses didn't enter the promise land because he didn't have faith in God's promise".

But we can also witness this in the lives and hearts of many Christians. If we were to take a look at scripture and the many promises that God gives us for our tithing and giving of our gifts and money back to God, it would seem so easy to follow and give of our finances. We may even claim trust that "God is in control of our finances", but we may seldom place the actual money in His hands. "Our bills were too great", or "I'm trying to provide what is best for my family and kids."

But God promises that He will take care of our financial situations if we place them in His hands.

It seems that we might not believe God's promise. We might not believe God's word.

But we can hold great encouragement in the knowledge that God has stepped in to deliver us. We read that God sent Joshua to succeed Moses. Joshua means "The Lord is salvation". Because of Joshua's obedience to God, he was able to lead the Israelites out of the wilderness and into the promised land.

There is a beautiful connection in this story of Moses and Joshua. The name Joshua in Hebrew is Yehoshua. This word, when translated into Greek, is the name Jesus.

We can see that Joshua in this story is the deliverer for the Israelites, but this is also pointing us towards Jesus and His redeeming actions. Just as Joshua's obedience to God's word in Numbers provides a deliverance, we witness Christ's delivering acts through His perfect life of obedience, along with His sacrificial death on the cross.

The core of this delivering story is not about our obedience. Deliverance is found in our faith and belief in God. Jesus has already lived the perfect obedient life (which we can not live) and it is through our faith in His life and death that we begin to live into the promises which God has set out for us in scripture.

Because of Christ's love, life, death, and resurrection, we have been given the fruit of Christ's obedience. That fruit is deliverance from the wilderness of separation from God and entrance into eternal life with God.

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This Think Sheet is a free resource to aid in personal devotion or group study. For more, go to engedichurch.com.

**SONGS SUNG DURING WORSHIP:**

I Stand Amazed, Love Shines, Death In His Grave, Praise To The Lord, Spirit Speaks.