



**Educate
+ Engage**



WHO ARE YOU
LISTENING
TO?



Guiding Voices

OVERVIEW

Who are you listening to? Trust the voices in your life that will guide you not away from God's plan but toward it.

Scripture Passage

Luke 15:11 (ESV)

And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living.

EDUCATE

There is a story from a group of committed Christians called the Desert Fathers. A man named Saint Pambo once gave a protege a dry piece of wood and ordered him to plant and water it. The protege followed the voice of Saint Pambo and began hauling water from a distance of about twelve miles. The protege watered and watered that stick two times a day for three years. One day the wood sprouted and grew into a fruitful tree. Then Pambo took the fruit and began handing it out saying, "Take and eat from the fruit of obedience." Little did the protege know how long that process would take and if the process would produce fruit. But what he did was follow the instructions of the voices guiding him.

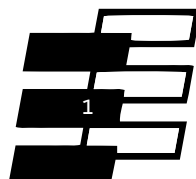
Have you ever had to plant something that eventually produced fruit?

Point 1: Guiding voices protect us.

When we put our trust in guiding voices, it helps us to discern dangerous voices or even distracting voices. Trust takes time and trusting a guiding voice will keep you on the right path. When you trust a guiding voice, you are saying, "I trust you that when you see danger, you will warn, and when you see something that could hurt me, you will guide me." But here is the secret: guiding voices aren't used on smooth roads and calm conditions. We need a guiding voice when the road is bumpy, things are at the darkest, and we are most confused. That is when we must trust the most.

Point 2: God gives us pastors to be a guiding voice.

So who do you trust? Start with your pastor. Your spiritual leader is the first and best place to start. Your pastor cares for you and wants the perfect will of God in your life. Your pastor is the



Lesson 3

one who prays for you even when you don't even know it. Your pastor is fasting meals for you and never tells you. You can trust the man or woman of God in your life. When you are in need, the first place to go should be your pastor.

Who do you call when you are in need?

Point 3: Identify spiritual voices in your life you will listen to.

Who do you listen to? You should go to your church leadership. Perhaps it is a youth pastor or lead pastor. Maybe it's your pastor's wife or Sunday school teacher. These voices can help you pray about situations. They can encourage you to seek God, keep the faith, and listen to the guiding voices. God is not the author of confusion.

When we make decisions with no counsel, we will end up where our wants take us. The story of the prodigal son is a great example here. The prodigal son clearly had no counsel. He would not listen to anyone in his life. Nobody pulled him aside or could pull him aside and say "You are making a terrible decision!" He had no voice telling him to leave but also no voice telling him to stay. The tragic result was the man lived recklessly and lost it all.

If you lost everything, what would you be most sad about losing?

The prodigal lost it all. He found himself in a pigpen eating slop. Many people prefer organic food they call farm to table, but the prodigal went from fine dining at the table to the farm. Perhaps if he would have listened to a guiding voice, it would have prevented the heartache for him and his family. Some things can be prevented when we bring a guiding voice into the conversation.

Closing

It would be wise to decide who has the voice to speak into your life. Who in your life will you listen to when they speak? If you disagree with them, will you trust that it is because they see something you do not? If they tell you what you don't want to hear, will you trust that they know something you do not? The fruit of obedience starts with voices who can guide you when they speak.

ENGAGE

I think it would be beneficial today to pray for our leaders together. We know that they are under a lot and they care for our souls. We pray that the Lord will bless them, restore them, and renew them. Would you commit to praying for our leaders this week?

