

# God's Voice

by Jennifer George

## Introduction

Most Christians know God wants them to obey. **Obedience** means to do what God tells us to do. Christians know obedience brings good results, peace, and closeness to God. However, obeying God is not always easy.

How can we know what God wants from us? How do we listen to God? He doesn't usually speak to people audibly, though it is possible for Him to do. How does God speak? And if we think we hear God's voice, how do we know it is Him, and not our wishes or other people's influence?

This week, your family will learn about God's voice. Hearing and knowing God's voice requires a close relationship with Him. It takes practice. When you listen carefully to God through prayer, godly wisdom, and Scripture, it is easier to recognize God's voice.

Note: Very young children will not be able to grasp a concept as abstract as God's voice coming in various ways. They can, however, understand that God wants them to talk with Him, He can help them know what to do, and He gives them the Bible to guide them.

Here are some things to prepare for family devotions this week:

Paper, crayons or markers, and stickers for Tuesday and Wednesday

Assorted stickers for younger children on Thursday

A blindfold for Friday

Two cake mixes and ingredients for the Weekend

## MONDAY

READ REVELATION 3:20.

Have each person in the family sing a different song at the same time. After a while, stop the singing and ask family members what song the person next to them was singing.

Have the family sing again. While the family sings, ask quietly, "Hello? Hello? Can you hear me?" Stop the singing again and ask everyone what they heard you say.

- **Was it easy to figure out what everyone was singing? You were probably distracted by everyone else's singing.**

**Sometimes people get distracted and can't hear what God wants to tell them.**

- **What are some things that might keep you from hearing what God is saying to you?**
- **How can we listen to God?** (Have quiet times, pray and ask God to speak to you, and read and learn from Bible stories.)

**God has very important things He wants us to know. If we aren't paying attention to God, we might miss these things.**

**Just as you couldn't hear what I said when everyone was singing, you can't listen closely to God if other things distract you.**

During your time of prayer, ask God to help your family remove anything that might distract them from hearing God's voice.

## TUESDAY

READ PSALM 29.

Give each person a sheet of paper. Have the family members decorate the paper with markers, crayons, and stickers. Show the children how to make megaphones by rolling the paper into tubes and taping the paper in place. Talk through the tubes to make your voice louder.

- **How loudly can you speak?**
- **What happens when you speak loudly?**
- **According to Psalm 29, what happened when God spoke?**
- **How would you feel if God spoke aloud to you?**

**God is so powerful. God created the world just by telling it to happen!**

- **How should people respond to God when He speaks?**

Spend a few moments as a family in silent prayer. Close by asking God to help your family respond positively to Him when they hear God's voice.

## WEDNESDAY

READ 1 SAMUEL 15:1-22.

**In Bible times, God's people gave their best animals and best crops to express thanks to God. Saul pretended to bring God the best animals for a sacrifice. But God is pleased when we obey Him completely.**

**In our scripture, God asked Saul to destroy everything the Amalekites owned. Saul didn't want to destroy the good animals, so he kept them. When is it difficult for you to obey God?**



Give your family members sheets of paper and crayons. Remind them to listen to the directions very carefully. Then read these directions:

1. Listen to all the directions before you start.
  2. Draw a circle for a face.
  3. Draw two eyes, a nose, and a mouth.
  4. Ignore the other directions. Lay your crayon down without drawing anything.
- *Did you follow the first instruction, or did you begin drawing right away?*
  - *Why would it be easier to listen to all the directions first?*
  - *God loves us. To help us, He tells us what we should do. How should we respond to God when He tells us what to do?*

Spend time praying as a family. Ask the youngest member of the family who can pray to close your family time in prayer.

## THURSDAY

READ DEUTERONOMY 30:19b-20.

- *Is it easy for you to take other people's advice? Why, or why not?*
- *Why do you think God doesn't just make us do what He wants?*

God doesn't make people obey Him. He wants us to obey Him because we love Him. He lets us choose what we will do. But He doesn't leave us on our own to figure out what is right.

Have your family plan tomorrow's menu from a list of foods. Include both healthy and unhealthy menu choices on the list. There is one rule: the meal has to be healthy. Let everyone decide which foods to prepare and serve.

- *Is it difficult to choose a menu?*
- *How did you know which foods to choose?*
- *In our scripture reading, why did God give the people a choice, and then tell them what to choose?*

For younger children, offer two choices of stickers. After they make the choice, ask them why they chose the sticker they did. Then tell them God allows us to make choices. He wants people to obey Him. Because He loves us, He lets us choose whether or not to obey Him.

As a family, pray that God will help you know and make the right choices. Allow time for each family member to pray a sentence prayer.

## FRIDAY

READ JOHN 10:1-5.

Blindfold one family member. Tell the person to stand up only when he or she hears the voice of the oldest person in the family. Let the rest of the family speak in turns, using silly voices. Repeat the game, switching roles.

- *How did you know when the oldest person was talking?*
- *Do you know your friends' voices? Why?*

- *How can you get to know God's voice?* (Spend time getting to know Him.)
- *Tell about a time when you heard God's voice.*

How do you know if you are hearing God's voice? Here are some ways to know:

1. Prayer. Ask God if He is talking to you.
2. The Bible. Does what you hear agree with what the Bible says?
3. Experience. From what you know about God, do you believe He would tell you this?
4. Christian advice. Ask a wise, mature Christian to help you understand God's words to you.

Close with prayer. Ask God to help your family know when it is God speaking.

## WEEKEND

READ 1 SAMUEL 13:5-15.

Today's scripture shows the result of disobeying God's voice. God chose Saul to rule over Israel. God commanded Saul how to lead the army in upcoming battles.

God told Saul what He wanted him to do. Saul only did part of what God asked, not all of it. The only way Saul could rule Israel properly was with God's guidance. Saul chose to ignore God's commands. Eventually, God removed Saul from the throne, and He chose David to be the next king.

Gather enough ingredients to bake two cakes. Pair up non-reading children with someone who can read. Divide the family into two groups (or make separate cakes, if it is just the two of you). Provide two sets of directions for baking the cake. Have one group follow the recipe exactly. Have the other group skip part of the recipe, such as sugar or eggs. Mark the pans so you can tell the two cakes apart. When the cakes are ready, serve pieces from each cake.

After you have tried both cakes, discuss the following:

- *Which cake tasted better? Why?* (One group didn't follow the directions completely.)
- *When we know what God wants us to do, we need to obey Him. Why should we obey God completely?*
- *When we don't obey God completely, what can happen?*

Pray, asking God to help your family to obey completely all of God's commands.



# God's Justice

by Jeremy Bond

## Introduction

The Tick is a superhero who loves his job, and he is my favorite superhero of all time. He had two catch phrases he used. The first is, "Spoon!" I don't know what it means, but I laugh when he yells it on his way to save the day. After he successfully thwarts an evil plan, he yells, "Let's hang 10 for JUSTICE!"

The Tick is the first thing I think of when I hear the word justice. I think of him defending what is right. In the superhero world, justice means "the good guys win, and the bad guys lose."

But what does justice look like in our world? What does God's justice look like? **Justice** is the result of doing what is fair and right. By understanding God's justice, we are no longer pressured to be the "superhero." When we understand God's justice, we can allow God to be the superhero. This week gives your family an introduction to God's justice. Each time you pick up this devotional, just think, "Let's hang 10 for justice!"

Here are some things to prepare for family devotions this week:

Paper and pencil for Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday

Play-Doh for Friday



## MONDAY

READ GENESIS 3:8-13.

Before devotions, write some silly excuses on separate pieces of paper. Fold the papers and place them in a container. Here are a couple to get you started.

- *I can't because my pet giraffe wants to play hide-and-seek with me.*
- *I can't because I hurt my pinky finger jumping on a trampoline on Mars.*

Have your family share something God might ask them to do. After each "God request," draw an excuse from the hat and read it aloud. Family members can write their own silly excuses to keep playing the game.

**Many times we make excuses for not obeying God, but excuses don't work. God is fair and just, and He makes His expectations clear to us just as He did for Adam and Eve.**

Discuss the following questions as a family:

- **What did God tell Adam and Eve they could not do in the garden? What excuses did they give God for disobeying?**
- **Why didn't God listen to Adam and Eve's excuses?**
- **What are some excuses you have made when God asked you to do something?**

Close by praying together. Ask God to help your family live in obedience and not make excuses.

## TUESDAY

READ ROMANS 6:23.

Have the family complete this mad lib. Write the suggested words in the space provided before reading the story.

Billy was one puzzle away from winning the grand prize. He loved the Wheel of \_\_\_\_\_, but now he was actually

(noun)

on his favorite game show.

Pat Saycheese said, "Spin the wheel." Billy spun the \_\_\_\_\_ with all his strength.

(something in a kitchen)

He was so nervous. His \_\_\_\_\_ were sweating.

(plural body part)

What if he couldn't solve the puzzle? What if a giant \_\_\_\_\_ fell from the ceiling and knocked

(color) (animal)

him out!

"\$1000 bonus," yelled Pat. "If you solve the puzzle in the next \_\_\_\_\_ seconds," Pat explained, "you win the

(number)

grand prize of a \_\_\_\_\_ and \$1000!"

(adjective) (something in a garage)

"The gift of \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ life.

(famous person)

(adjective)

Billy was running out of time. 15 seconds . . . 10 seconds. "What's the answer," Billy thought. 5 seconds . . . "I've got it," he shouted.

"The gift of God is eternal life!" Billy was sure of it.



“Correct!” Pat exclaimed! Balloons and \_\_\_\_\_ fell  
(food)

from the ceiling. He won!

- **What was the answer to the puzzle?**
- **Eternal life is God’s free gift when we do what?**  
(Believe in Jesus)

**We can’t earn eternal life. It is a gift from God.**  
As a family, thank God for His gift of eternal life.

## WEDNESDAY

**Zing!** “That was a close one,” Stephen thought as the angry man looked for another rock. **Thud!** “That one hurt.” Rocks hit Stephen on his back, arms, and the rest of his body.

Stephen loved Jesus more than anything else, and he wanted others to know about the love of Jesus. Unfortunately, some people didn’t want to hear about Jesus. When Stephen talked about Jesus, the people became very angry. They dragged Stephen out of the city and began throwing rocks at him. They wanted to kill him.

**Whack!** Another rock hit Stephen. Stephen got to his knees. The rocks continued to hit him. “Lord, please forgive them.” Stephen’s last words were not full of anger and hate, but of forgiveness and peace.

Read Romans 12:17-19.

- **Why do you think Stephen asked God to forgive the men?**
- **According to Romans, what should we do when people make us angry or hurt us?**

Part of God’s justice is taking care of revenge.

- **How do you keep yourself from revenge when people hurt you?**

As a family, pray for God to help you not to take revenge on others for hurtful actions.

## THURSDAY

There is a very famous prison called Alcatraz. It is located off the California coast. It is no longer a working prison, but it is a tourist attraction.

Test your family’s knowledge of Alcatraz with this true or false quiz:

- **Prisoners in Alcatraz were allowed three visitors per month.** (False. Only one visitor was allowed per month!)
- **Only two prisoners ever escaped from Alcatraz.** (False. There were no confirmed escapes.)
- **Inmates were not allowed to talk except during mealtime and a short recreation time.** (True)

Prisons provide punishment for people who commit crimes. We consider the prisoners to be “brought to justice” because they are being punished.

Jesus’ death on the Cross for our sins brought us to justice. Because Jesus gave His life for us, we are able to have a right relationship with God. Justice comes through Jesus.

Read Romans 3:23-26.

Distribute a small piece of paper and a pencil to each family member. Have each person write one sin he or she has committed. No one else will read this paper. Take turns tearing up the paper and say, “Jesus brought my sins to justice.” After everyone has torn the papers, close with a prayer of thanksgiving.

## FRIDAY

Give Play-Doh to each member of the family. Have each person mold an object to represent something strong and powerful.

Read Isaiah 40:28-31.

**There are lots of things that are powerful. However, none of these are more powerful than God.**

- **In Isaiah 40:28, how does the writer describe God as powerful?**
- **God is super powerful, but He takes time to hear from us. According to verses 29-31, what can God do for His people?**

**How great is it that the big powerful God of justice loves us, forgives us, and wants to hear from us!**

Close your time together with silent prayer.

## WEEKEND

The story of Saul and David is one of the best stories of God’s justice. Just when the reader thinks evil will prevail, here comes God to deliver justice.

If you want to read more about Saul and David’s story, check out 1 Samuel 18:1-16; 19:15-16; 28:1-24; 31:1-7; 2 Samuel 2:1-11; 5:1-12.

- **David might have been tempted to seek revenge against Saul. Why do you think he didn’t?**
- **List some areas in your life and our world where it seems like evil is winning.**

Spend time in prayer about these things and ask for God’s justice to win out in all areas of your life.

