

Read: Ezekiel 2:9-3:11

## Are You Listening?

### **Ezekiel 3:10-11 (EHV)**

And he said to me, "Son of man, listen carefully and take to heart all the words I speak to you. Go now to your people in exile and speak to them. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says,' whether they listen or fail to listen."

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Nobody listened when Ellie spoke. Ellie was a quiet, little lady with three older siblings, who all liked to talk... loudly. They rarely listened when she spoke. One day Ellie tried to ask her sister and brother to play a game with her, but they were too busy arguing. Later that day, Ellie asked her other sister to read her a story, but her sister was too busy talking with one of her friends. That evening at the dinner table, Ellie tried to tell her parents about her day at school only to have her voice drowned out by her noisy family members. Mom and Dad turned their attention to them because they were so loud! Nobody was listening to Ellie. Finally she cried out, "WHY DOESN'T ANYONE LISTEN TO ME?!?" Everyone went silent and looked at her. They were finally listening to Ellie.

Six hundred years before the birth of Jesus, God appeared to a believer named Ezekiel with a job. "Go to the people of Israel and speak my words to them." Ezekiel was going to be a prophet who would proclaim whatever message God wanted the people to hear. Sometimes it would be good news. Sometimes it would be bad. The problem was most people were not going to listen. God described them as "hardheaded and hard-hearted." Many would ignore or reject his message. Some would even get angry with Ezekiel. That would make his job very hard, but the people needed to hear these messages from God, so he went whether they listened or not.

Are you listening? Are you listening to this devotion? Do you listen when you hear God's Word read or preached in worship? Do you listen when the Word is taught in school or Sunday School? Every day we are tempted to not listen when we hear God's Word. The devil doesn't want us to listen. There's a part of us that may even think it's boring. *But listen!* Through that Word, God speaks to us about forgiveness and peace through Jesus. So how will God get our attention? He is not going to yell, "Why aren't you listening to me?" Instead, God uses our parents, our pastors, our teachers, and others to get our attention. Because they love us, they want to share the best news of all with us—that Jesus loves us! That's a message worth our listening!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- What makes listening to a devotion sometimes hard for you?
- Who does God send to help us listen to his Word?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- What did God mean when he said the people were “hardheaded and hard-hearted”?
- Even though sometimes it’s hard, why is it important for us to listen to God’s Word whenever we hear it read, preached, or taught?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Identify three distractions that keep you from listening to God speak through his Word.
- How would you respond to a friend who tells you, “I don’t like going to church, because I get so bored”?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Lord God, we don’t always listen to you and your Word. We get distracted. We get bored. Instead, open our ears to listen, our minds to think, and our hearts to receive all that you have for us in your holy Word. Amen.