

# Meditation 3

## 1 SAMUEL 3:1-19

“What did he say to you?”

During the time young Samuel was minister to the Lord under Eli, the word of the Lord was scarce and vision infrequent. One day Eli was asleep in his usual place. His eyes had lately grown so weak that he could not see. The lamp of God was not yet extinguished, and Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was. The Lord called to Samuel, who answered, “Here I am.” He ran to Eli and said, “Here I am. You called me.” “I did not call you,” Eli answered. “Go back to sleep.” So he went back to sleep. Again the Lord called Samuel, who rose and went to Eli. “Here I am,” he said. “You called me.” But he answered, “I did not call you, my son. Go back to sleep.” Samuel did not yet recognize the Lord, since the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, for the third time. Getting up and going to Eli, he said, “Here I am. You called me.” Then Eli understood that the Lord was calling the youth. So he said to Samuel, “Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, **‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’**”

When Samuel went to sleep in his place, the Lord came and stood there, calling out as before: Samuel, Samuel! Samuel answered, “Speak, for your servant is listening.” The Lord said to Samuel: I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears it ring. On that day I will carry out against Eli everything I have said about his house, beginning to end. I announce to him that I am condemning his house once and for all, because of this crime: though he knew his sons were blaspheming God, he did not reprove them. Therefore, I swear to Eli’s house: No sacrifice or offering will ever expiate its crime. Samuel then slept until morning, when he got up early and opened the doors of the temple of the Lord.

He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, but Eli called to him, “Samuel, my son!” He replied, “Here I am.” Then Eli asked, **“What did he say to you? Hide nothing from me! May God do thus to you, and more, if you hide from me a single thing he told you.”** So Samuel told him everything, and held nothing back. Eli answered, “It is the Lord. What is pleasing in the Lord’s sight, the Lord will do.” Samuel grew up, and the Lord was with him, not permitting any word of his to go unfulfilled.

## Points for Meditation

- 1) “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening” (1 Sam 3:9).
  - a. Introduction to discernment: “In time, then, we come to discern in prayer the often unexpected signs by which God makes himself known to us, leads us to conversion and shows us His will for our lives” (Pope Francis’ Wednesday Audience, September 7, 2022).
  - b. Prayerfully and reverently spiritually walk through this passage from 1 Sam 3, keeping in mind the idea of discernment. This will be the backdrop of all of our theories, meditations, reflections, and sharings this week. See what the Holy Spirit says to you in and through this passage about discernment, with what knowledge you may or may not have about true discernment. The Holy Spirit will be there to guide you.

- 2) “What did He say to you?” (1 Sam 3:17)

“Today we focus on the first of (discernment’s) fundamental elements, which is prayer. To discern we need to be in an environment, in a state of prayer.

“Prayer is an indispensable aid for spiritual discernment, especially when it involves the affective dimension, enabling us to address God with simplicity and familiarity, as one would speak to a friend. It is knowing how to go beyond thoughts, to enter into intimacy with the Lord, with an affectionate spontaneity. The secret of the lives of the saints is familiarity and confidence with God, which grows within them and makes it ever easier to recognize what is pleasing to Him. True prayer is familiarity with and confidence in God. It is not reciting prayers like a parrot, blah, blah, blah, no. True prayer is this spontaneity and affection for the Lord. This familiarity overcomes fear or doubt that His will is not for our good, a temptation that sometimes runs through our thoughts and makes our heart restless and uncertain, or even bitter.

“Discerning what is happening within us is not easy, for appearances are deceptive, but familiarity with God can melt doubts and fears in a gentle way, making our lives increasingly receptive to his “gentle light,” according to the beautiful expression of Saint John Henry Newman. The saints shine with reflected light and show in the simple gestures of their day the loving presence of God, who makes the impossible possible. It is said that two spouses who have lived together for a long time, loving each other, end up resembling each other. Something similar can be said about affective prayer. In a gradual but effective way, it makes us more and

more capable of recognizing what counts through connaturality, as something that springs from the depths of our being. To be in prayer does not mean saying words, words, no: being in prayer means opening my heart to Jesus, drawing close to Jesus, allowing Jesus to enter into my heart and making us feel His presence. And there we can discern when it is Jesus and when it is us with our thoughts, that so many times are far from what Jesus wants” (Pope Francis’ Wednesday Audience, September 28, 2022).

- a. I am going to say something that in itself is funny, or better, rather sad: most people when they are discerning something don’t pray about it!! It’s amazing! As you begin to mentor (and maybe you have already run into it as you began mentoring in these past months), your mentee brings you things they are trying to discern. You ask them the simple question, “Have you asked God what He wants? Have you prayed about it?” They will look at you with a shocked look on their faces and reply, “No, I haven’t! Haven’t you done the same thing with your mentor?!”

### 3) Know thyself!

- a. “During the time young Samuel was minister to the Lord under Eli, the word of the Lord was scarce and vision infrequent” (1 Sam 3:1).
- b. Prayer and knowing your circumstances are the most essential elements necessary to make a good decision. In Samuel’s case some of his circumstances was that he was young, that he lived in the temple and at his time, “the word of the Lord was scarce and vision infrequent.” What are your circumstances?
- c. First and foremost: Know YOURSELF. Who you are. Who your mentee is. Their state in life. Their issues, their limitations, their strengths, their weaknesses; your strengths, your weaknesses, etc. We need to “listen” to all those “truths” of our lives to understand God’s will.
- d. As Pope Francis says, “As an exercise of our God-given freedom, spiritual discernment seeks to know our place in the Creator’s plan for ourselves and for our world” (Pope Francis’ Wednesday Audience, August 31, 2022).
- e. The more you know yourself and understand the circumstances of your life, know reality as it truly is, the more you can understand quickly and more surely God’s will for you! Listen again to Pope Francis when he says, “Today I would like, in an almost complementary way, to emphasize that good discernment also requires self-knowledge. Knowing oneself. And this is not easy. Indeed, discernment involves our human faculties:

memory, intellect, will, affections. Often, we do not know how to discern because we do not know ourselves well enough, and so we do not know what we really want. You have often heard: 'But that person, why doesn't he sort out his life? He has never known what he wants...'. ' (Pope Francis' Wednesday Audience, October 5, 2022).

- f. Fr. Thomas Green says something similar, "I have come to the conviction that the greatest obstacle to true discernment (and to real growth in prayer) is not the intangible nature of God, but the fact that we do not know ourselves sufficiently, and do not even want to know ourselves as we really are. Almost all of us hide behind a mask, not only in front of others, but also when we look in the mirror" (cf. Thomas H. Green, *Weeds Among the Wheat*, 1984).

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### Lord Jesus – Let me Know Myself

Lord Jesus, let me know myself and know You,  
And desire nothing save only You...  
Let me do everything for the sake of You.  
Let me humble myself and exalt You.  
Let me think of nothing except You.  
Let me die to myself and live in You.  
Let me accept whatever happens as from You.  
Let me banish self and follow You,  
And ever desire to follow You.  
Let me fly from myself and take refuge in You,  
That I may deserve to be defended by You.  
Let me fear for myself, let me fear You,  
And let me be among those who are chosen by You.  
Let me distrust myself and put my trust in You.  
Let me be willing to obey for the sake of You.  
Let me cling to nothing save only to You,  
And let me be poor because of You.  
Look upon me, that I may love You.  
Call me that I may see You,  
And for ever enjoy You.

(Lord, let me know myself!)

Amen.

—*St. Augustine of Hippo*

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