

FEARLESS: Unfailing Courage from the Ultimate Shepherd

Daily Devotional Day 2

[Family Version]

DISCUSSION QUESTION: How do you know the right thing to do or the right way to live?

DISCUSSION QUESTION: When we are trying to make the right decisions, what kind of voices do you need to listen to in your life?

READ TOGETHER: John 10:1-6

DISCUSSION QUESTION: How does this passage describe the relationship between the sheep and the shepherd?

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Why is it important for the sheep to recognize their shepherd's voice?

If you were in a crowded room, do you think you could recognize the sound of your mom's or dad's voice? What about the sound of their laugh or cough? There have actually been studies done that find that even in a really noisy place, people can hear their loved one's voices above everything else—their husband or wife or parents or siblings, the people they are closest to. It just makes sense, doesn't it? The more time you spend with someone, the more you recognize their voice.

When Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd in the book of John, He is talking about a very close relationship. He said His sheep *know* Him, and He *knows* them. He even calls them by name. In the ancient world, different flocks of sheep often grazed together in the same open pasture. But when the shepherd was ready to move on or when it was time to go home for the night, he would let out a unique call or sound, and *only* his own flock would come out from the pasture and follow him. The sheep who were not his would stay put and not move. The sheep knew when it was time to go because they recognized their shepherd's voice calling them out.

Jesus says there are all different kinds of voices in the world that try to tell us which way to go, how to live a good life. Think about these examples:

- It's kind of like if your teacher is trying to tell you to focus on your work but your friend is trying to get you to make jokes in class. How do you know which voice to listen to?
- Your parents tell you not to use bad words, but some of the kids at school use them all the time. How do you know which voice to listen to?

Jesus says the world will keep trying to distract you or get you to do the wrong thing, even as you get older. There will always be other voices that try to lead you astray from what God is telling you to do, how He is telling you to live. The only way to know what is right is by listening for His voice and following Him.

But how can we hear Jesus's voice? How can we learn to recognize His voice among all the other voices in the world, like we recognize our mom's or dad's voice in a crowded room?

READ TOGETHER (again): John 10:4

We have to get to know Jesus. We have to learn what He says. How can we do that? By studying His Word, the Bible, as much as we can. Has your brother or sister ever told you, "Mom said such-and-such," and you thought, "Wait, that doesn't sound like something Mom would say"? You know it doesn't sound like something Mom would say because you've heard her tell you stuff your whole life.

In the same way, the more you study the Bible, the more you'll be able to do the same with Jesus. When people try to tell you something, you'll be able to say, "Wait, that doesn't sound like something Jesus would say." Or "That sounds like something Jesus would tell me to do." You will be able to recognize His voice and follow Him.

PARENT STORY: Tell a story about a time the world was trying to tell you to do one thing, but you chose to listen to Jesus instead.

FAMILY ACTIVITY (younger kids): Choose someone to be blindfolded. Tell them that one of you will be the only voice they should listen to—pick that person. The rest of the family will try to distract them from listening to that voice. Have the person try to get around the house by only listening to the true voice of instruction and trying to ignore all the other voices. Compare this to the life we are to live, listening to God's voice, over all others.

FAMILY ACTIVITY (older kids): Have the kids help you make a list of things the world might tell them to do. Go through it together and have them tell you whether Jesus would say the same thing. Bonus if you can find a Bible verse that backs up your thoughts.

PRAY: *Dear Jesus, thank you for being our Good Shepherd and leading us in the right way, the way that keeps us safe and gives us an abundant life. Please help me to listen for your voice. I promise to read and study Your Word so I can recognize Your voice in the crowd. In Jesus's name, Amen.*

MEMORY VERSE: "I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11).

VIDEO: Do a quick search on YouTube for videos showing that "sheep only hear their shepherd's voice." Prepare to be fascinated!