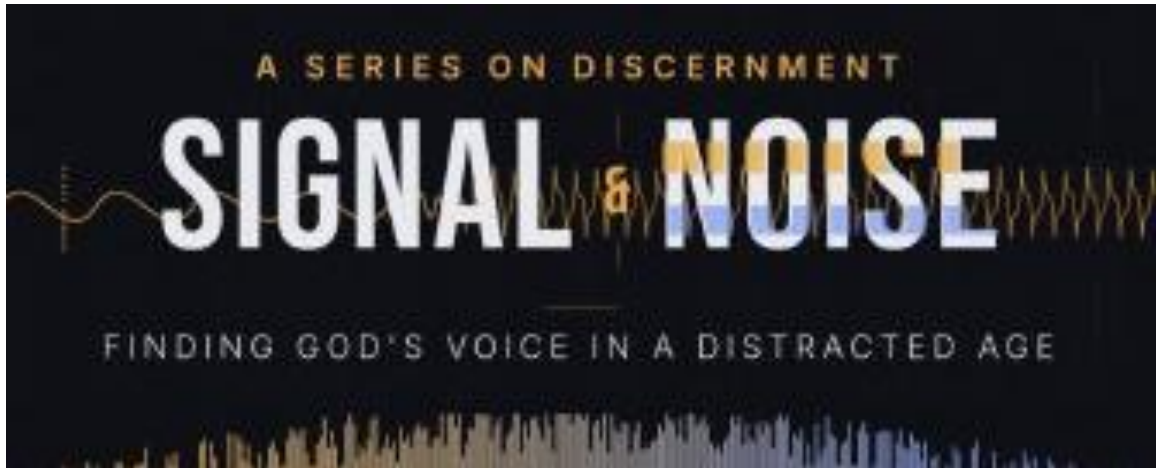




Part 3: The Power of Words

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when someone's words significantly impacted you—either positively or negatively. How did those words shape your reality in that moment?

Key Sermon Themes

1. Words Shape Reality

- Words can be descriptive (observing) or creative (shaping)
- Our words participate in either God's redemptive work or oppose it
- We carry the power to "bust down doors" of people's hearts with our words

2. The Noise That Obscures God's Voice

- Political noise (strategic advantages)
- Relational noise (leveraging connections)
- Religious noise (bandwagon prophecy)
- Internal noise (insecurity, doubt, past wounds)

3. Attitude Creates Atmosphere

- Our heart posture precedes our words

- Calm presence regulates; anxious presence dysregulates
 - Attitude creates safety or threat in relationships
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Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

Understanding the Message

1. **Proverbs 18:20-21** says "death and life are in the power of the tongue." What does it mean practically that our words can "bust down the protective barriers" of someone's heart?
2. In the story from 1 Kings, Jehoshaphat and Ahab faced multiple types of "noise" (political, relational, religious, internal). Which type of noise do you find most difficult to silence when trying to hear God's voice?
3. Paul mentioned that words can either "participate in God's redemptive work or oppose it." Can you think of examples of each from your own life or observations?

Personal Reflection

4. Michelle shared the powerful statement: "You are worthy of love. You are worthy of being cared for." Why is it sometimes harder to speak life over ourselves than over others?
5. Reflect on the atmosphere you typically create when you enter:
 - Your home
 - Your workplace
 - This church

Does your presence tend to regulate (bring calm) or dysregulate (bring anxiety)? Why?

6. What "internal noise" most frequently keeps you from hearing God's signal clearly? (Examples: fear of being wrong, need for approval, past failures, financial concerns)

Going Deeper

7. Jesus remained calm during the storm while trained fishermen panicked. What does this teach us about where peace originates? How can we cultivate that kind of internal peace?

8. The sermon mentioned that in the Word of Faith movement, there was both truth and extreme reactions. How do we balance:
- Understanding the power of our words
 - Not falling into manipulation or "name it, claim it" theology
 - Remaining humble before God's sovereignty
9. Michelle's students had "years and years of death being spoken over them." Who in your sphere of influence might be carrying similar burdens? How could you consistently speak life to them?
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Practical Applications (15-20 minutes)

This Week's Challenge

Choose **at least two** of the following to practice this week:

1. The Mirror Exercise

- Each morning, place your hand over your heart and declare:
 - "I am worthy of love"
 - "I am worthy of being cared for"
 - "God sees value in me even when I can't"

2. Identify Your Noise

- Journal about which type of noise (political, relational, religious, internal) most obscures God's voice in your life
- Ask God to help you recognize it and filter it out
- Share your findings with an accountability partner

3. Speak Life Intentionally

- Choose one person (family member, coworker, friend) who needs words of life
- Commit to speaking specific, genuine encouragement to them at least three times this week
- Notice how it affects both them and you

4. Regulate Your Atmosphere

- Before entering your home, workplace, or any gathering, pause
- Take three deep breaths
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you bring His peace into that space
- Pay attention to how the atmosphere shifts

5. The 24-Hour Word Fast

- Choose a 24-hour period to be extraordinarily intentional with your words
- Before speaking, ask: "Does this participate in God's redemptive work?"
- Journal about what you notice

Accountability Questions

- What specific situation this week will test your ability to speak life instead of death?
 - Who can you ask to pray for you as you practice these disciplines?
 - How will you remind yourself throughout the week of the power you carry?
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Group Activity Option (10 minutes)

"Speaking Life" Circle

If your group feels comfortable:

- Stand in a circle
- Each person takes a turn standing in the center
- Group members take turns speaking one specific word of life, encouragement, or affirmation over that person
- The person in the center simply receives (no need to respond or deflect)
- Continue until everyone has had a turn

Note: This can be deeply meaningful but also uncomfortable. Honor anyone who prefers to pass.

Closing Reflection

Read together: Matthew 7:7-11

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

Final Thought: The noise will never completely go away, but we can mature as sons and daughters so that the signal of God's voice becomes priority over all other noise. Our words plant seeds, and our attitudes water them—together they grow either life or death in every relationship.

Closing Prayer

Pray together:

"Father, thank You that You continually speak words of life over us. Help us to silence the noise—political, relational, religious, and internal—that keeps us from hearing Your voice clearly. Give us the courage to speak life over ourselves and others, even when it's uncomfortable. May our words participate in Your redemptive work, and may our attitudes create space for Your Holy Spirit to move. We are worthy of Your love because You have declared it so. In Jesus' name, Amen."

For Further Study

- Proverbs 18:20-21
 - Matthew 12:46-50
 - Proverbs 15:1
 - Mark 4:35-41
 - James 3:1-12
 - Ephesians 4:29
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Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to those who may have experienced significant verbal abuse
- Create a safe space where people can be honest about their struggles
- Don't force anyone to participate in the group activity if they're uncomfortable
- Consider having tissues available—this topic can bring up deep emotions
- Follow up during the week with anyone who seemed particularly impacted