

Small Group Study Guide

ICE BREAK

- Share about a time when you became aware that people were not really listening to what you were saying or when you were not really listening to what someone else was saying. How did that make you feel?

STUDY

1. **Pastor Chris said, "I don't know that I draw near to God often enough to listen."** How would you honestly describe your own prayer life - is it more talking or more listening? What makes listening feel difficult?
2. **Solomon warns against "the sacrifice of fools." Meaning that we are coming before God while simply going through the motions without genuine attention.** What does that kind of hollow worship or prayer look like in your own experience? What tends to pull you in that direction?
3. **Pastor Chris shared a personal story about lying in bed with Tara, praying through a major decision, and in a moment of silence hearing the words "I own time."** Have you ever had an experience of sensing God speak into a moment of stillness? What was that like? If not, what do you think gets in the way?
4. **Ecclesiastes 5:3 notes that a dream can come from many cares rather than from God.** How do you personally discern the difference between a God-given direction and a desire driven by your own anxieties or ambitions?
5. **In Matthew 21 we read about the parable of the two sons -- one who refused but later obeyed, and one who agreed but never followed through.** Which son do you tend to resemble more in your relationship with God? Why?
6. **The Screwtape Letters (C.S. Lewis) quote warns that the enemy's strategy is to prevent us from converting our spiritual convictions into action -- "let him do anything but act on it."**
 - a) Where in your life right now is there a gap between something you have said you would do before God and what you have actually done?
 - b) What is one commitment or vow -- formal or informal -- that you have made to God that you need to take more seriously?
7. **Pastor Chris said, "When we lack an awe of God it leads to some awful decisions."**
 - a) Where have you seen that to be true -- either in your own life or in the lives of others?
 - b) What practices, habits, or disciplines have helped you cultivate a genuine reverence for God rather than a casual or transactional relationship with Him?
8. **We ended the service in silence and communion.**
 - a) How did that feel? Was silence uncomfortable, meaningful, or both?
 - b) What, if anything, came to you in that quiet?

REFLECT

Beethoven composed his greatest masterpiece -- the Ninth Symphony -- in complete deafness. Freed from the noise around him, he heard only what was forming inside. His silence produced something the world has never forgotten.

- What might God be trying to form in you in the silence you have been avoiding?

PRAY

In the same way we ended the service, close your time together by praying the Lord's Prayer in unison. Before you begin, take sixty seconds of silence together. Then pray.