

THE ARTISAN SOUL

CREATING YOUR LIFE INTO A WORK OF ART

Session 2: Voice – Your Inner Narrative

February 16-22, 2020

What would the world be like if each of us had an inner voice that awakened within us our greatest self? I am reminded of those moments in biblical history when unique individuals suddenly hear the voice of God, that moment when they are undeniably called out to live a life bigger than themselves.

~Erwin McManus, *The Artisan Soul*

Hang Out (30 Minutes)

1. Ice Breaker: Remember, everyone has the right to pass on any question.
 - What is a piece of advice that an adult shared with you when you were growing up that has stuck with you and gave you guidance?
 - When you were between ages 12-25, did anyone advise you what you should be when you "grow up"? What was the advice and did that fit with what you wanted to be?

Watch the Video (24 Minutes)

Watch the video if necessary. If everyone viewed the sermon before the meeting, add this time to your discussion.

Discuss (30 Minutes)

It's okay if you don't get to every question. Leaders, guide the group to the questions you think will be most helpful.

1. What from Sunday's sermon would you like to bring up for discussion?
2. Help everyone look up and then have someone read Genesis 3:1-11.
 - In reading through this account this time what do you find interesting?
 - Think about the question that God asked the man that the man did not answer, "**Who told you that you were naked?**"

In contrast to what is reported in Genesis 2:25, what do you think that the man and his wife now felt? Discuss what you imagine were the thoughts and feelings that drove the man and women to take the action they did in verse 7.

Erwin McManus uses God's question to imagine similar questions that God might ask us when we listen to voices other than God's. *Whose voice did you replace my voice with? What story did you embrace? Who gave you this new narrative that now guides you and leaves you empty? Who have you been listening to? Who has led you to where you are right now? What story corrupted your soul? Why would you choose a narrative that only leads you to death?*

What question do you sense God is asking you about the voice you most listen to?

3. Who is one person that has influenced what you think about yourself for good or for bad? What is the narrative this person has had for your life and how has it shaped you?

4. Is the voice that speaks loudest in your internal narrative God's voice? If it is not God's voice, what steps can you take to disregard that voice and discover God's voice in you?
5. What is God's voice saying to you about yourself?
6. Listen to God's voice in 2 Corinthians 5:16-17 following the *Dwelling in the Word* manner of listening to Scripture. One person reads the passage. The others prepare to listen to the passage by closing their eyes, taking a couple relaxing breaths, and calming and emptying their minds as the reader slowly reads the passage. Carefully listen and identify the one word or phrase in the passage that captures your attention. Once you have identified that word or phrase, remain focused on it. After the reading allow 30 seconds of silence and then the reader reads the passage again. You again identify the word or phrase that captures your attention.
 - After the second reading, have everyone share their word or phrase and explain what is important for you in that word or phrase.
 - What is an "old" in your life that has gone because of your relationship with Jesus?
 - What is a "new" that has come because of your relationship with Jesus?

Bonus material

Watch and discuss "Naked and Unashamed" by Erwin McManus that is related to chapter 2 in *The Artisan Soul*, "Voice - The Narrative That Guides". Leaders – this video is posted on your resources website.

Possible Next Steps:

~Taken in part from The Artisan Soul by Erwin McManus

Commit to one of the following to be your next step this week:

- Write down a list of people who have influenced you for good or bad. Identify what narrative each of these people had for your life and how it shaped you. Make an honest assessment of which of those voices have had a dominant role in shaping your internal narrative of yourself.
- Identify whether the voice that speaks loudest in your internal narrative is God's voice. If it is not God's voice, work to disregard that voice and discover God's voice in you.
- Begin and end each day this week asking this prayer question, "Lord, what are you telling me about my story today?" Is there a Bible passage that comes to mind to reinforce what God is telling you? Here are some thoughts to inform this exercise: Focus on what it means to be created in God's image (Genesis 1:26). Reflect on God's declaration that you are wonderfully and marvelously made (Psalm 138:14). Place into your internal narrative that God knew you before you were born and calls you out with intention and purpose (Jeremiah 1:5, Galatians 1:15).
- Ask a few close friends to hear how you understand your story and ask them to reflect back to you if your assessment resonates with them.
- Decide who you want to become: What is the story you want to tell through your life?
- Write a declaration of who you are. Share it with at least one friend who will affirm your new life narrative.

Pray (5 Minutes) Read again 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Identify either an "old" way of living your life that you would like to be gone or a "new" way of living your life that you would like to come. Go around the circle and have everyone share their answer. Listen carefully to the person to your left. After everyone has finished sharing, go around the circle with each person filling in the blanks while praying this prayer for the person on their left:

Dear Lord, help (name of person) to (name what the person wishes to be gone or to come).

The leader begins and ends the prayer.