

## QUESTION 1

What stood out to you about what the word “listen” means in the Hebrew Bible?

## QUESTION 2

How is this different from or similar to how you usually use the word?

## DEUTERONOMY 6:1-9 NAS

1 “Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, 2 so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. 3 O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

4 “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

*The Shema is one of the most important prayers in the Bible. The Shema became something that Jewish people prayed every morning and evening for thousands of years, and it is still relevant to us today. It gets at the heart of all the commands given to the people of Israel. The Shema is a call to listen and respond to the truth that Yahweh is the one true God, and the appropriate response is to love Yahweh with all of our being. Knowing and loving God is how we can experience the fullness of life. And when we align our hearts with God’s, we will naturally care about the things he cares about and fulfill our roles as his partners in bringing about human flourishing on the earth.*

## QUESTION 1

How would you describe Yahweh’s character? What do you believe Yahweh cares about? Take a moment now to admire him for who he is and all he loves.

## QUESTION 2

It’s easy to forget about who Yahweh is and what he cares about as we go about daily life. Read Deuteronomy 6:7-9 again. What are some ways you can remind yourself of who Yahweh is on a daily basis?

## QUESTION 3

How do you think Yahweh feels about current events? How do our Black brothers and sisters feel about current events? How can you listen to their stories this week?

## JAMES 1:19-27 NAS

19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does. 26 If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. 27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

*One of the most famous passages in the book of James is about being not just a hearer of the word but a doer. The author compares these "hearers" to those who see themselves in the mirror and then immediately forget what they look like. The point is that hearing and doing cannot be separated. We don't truly see the mirror if we forget the image in it, and we don't truly listen if the message doesn't change us. We were made to reflect the image of God, but we forget who we were made to be when we do not let God's character shape our thought patterns, attitudes, affections, and actions. We are not truly listening to God's life-changing words if our lives are not changed.*

### QUESTION 1

Who around you might need support in this crisis?

### QUESTION 2

Where do you find hope when there's injustice in and around us?