

BEING A GOOD LISTENER

James 1:19-20

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.

1. Listening requires that we give thoughtful attention to the one speaking for the purpose of truly hearing them.

- God is a good listener and we are to reflect His character and ways. (Psalm 34:15-17; II Chronicles 7:15)

“The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right; his ears are open to their cries for help. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil; he will erase their memory from the earth. The Lord hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles.” (Psalm 34:15-17)

“My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made in this place.” (II Chronicles 7:15)

- Listening is not about you; rather, listening is about the person speaking to you. (Proverbs 20:5)

“Though good advice lies deep within the heart, a person with understanding will draw it out.” (Proverbs 20:5)

- The person you are listening to is important because they too are a child of God. (John 4:4-26)

2. Practically, we can develop our listening ability by following the law of LOVE:

- Listen

Really listen to what they are saying, without it going through filters. Don't interrupt. Don't worry about the next thing you have to do. This is what you are doing now.

Don't feel like you have to have an answer for everything they are saying (husbands, you don't have to “fix” everything your wife is trying to say).

- Observe

Make eye contact. Look for nonverbal cues. Be like Jesus, with the woman at the well. He was able to get after the deeper problem in her soul, than the arguments she was giving Him. Ask good questions. Draw things out. Be empathetic, compassionate.

People can tell if you truly care or not, and will test the waters to see how much they will share with you generally.

- **Validate**

Whatever someone is telling you is generally important to them, even if it isn't to you. Let them know they are important to you and that you respect their feelings, even if you don't agree with them.

- **Empathize**

Try to find a common ground. Be Spirit-led in how you respond to the person you are talking to. Build bridges rather than walls. It is not important to "win"; rather, it is important to truly listen and respond in a godly way. (James 1:19-20)

"So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God." (James 1:19- 20)

By Jesus taking the time to listen to the woman at the well, asking good questions, and really caring about her life, her life was changed and her testimony touched her town. She ran back to her town without her water jug and told everyone to come and see the man who told her everything she ever did. Remember, what He told her was shameful, yet she runs back excited to her town!

An encounter with Jesus is life changing, transforming, and He removes all guilt and shame when we believe in Him. How did she know He wouldn't tell everyone else? In verse 39 we see that, many of the Samaritans in that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony.