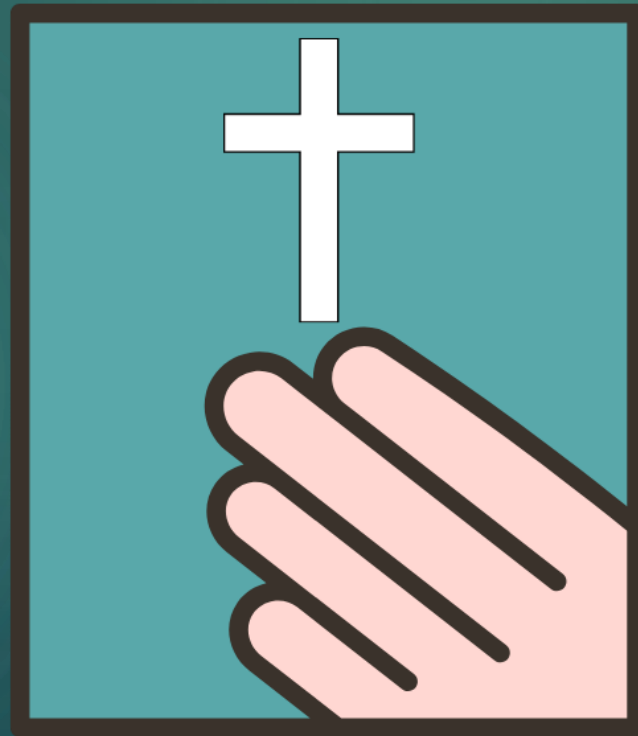


Living in Truth

Confident Conversation in a Conflicted Culture



Bible Study adapted from
Living in Truth by
Mary Jo Sharp

Welcome

- Recap of Week 2
 - Knowing What You Believe
- Building our Lives on the Firm Foundation
 - Getting to the bedrock often means pushing aside the "dirt" of false beliefs
 - Challenge our assumptions (brushing teeth example)
 - Rest in Jesus' authority – there is sufficient evidence to believe in Jesus
 - Faith is more than a knowledge issue, it's a heart issue



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Session 3: Listen to Discover Truth

IT'S **NOT**
ABOUT
THE
NAIL



Hearing vs. Listening

- How would you describe the difference between hearing and listening?
- Read Matthew 17:1-6.
 - Who is present on either side of Jesus?
 - What three things did God say about Jesus?
 - What do you think it means to "listen" to Jesus?

Hearing vs. Listening

- In Matthew 17, God holds up Jesus' authority over every other authority. How are you doing with listening to Jesus? How do you take time to regularly "hear" the Words of Jesus?
- To become good listeners in our community, we must first dedicate ourselves to listening to God, but we live in an age of distraction. When we are distracted, we are less focused listeners – to other people, let alone God.

Hearing vs. Listening

- According to surveys, 96% of people consider themselves to be good listeners, while 98% of that same group says they spend a large part of their day multitasking.
- In one study published in the *Journal of Business Management*, a group of managers all ranked themselves in the "good" to "very good" categories for listening skills. Their workers ranked those same managers in the "weak" category.

Hearing vs. Listening

- Most of us *want* to be good listeners, but we often overestimate our own skill level.
- Christians, when asked, are generally quick to say they are good listeners. Yet, most atheists, especially those who grew up in the church, disagree.
- What are some of the distractions that keep you from being an active listener to God and to others?

Hearing vs. Listening

- We live in a sound-bite culture that feeds off of instant gratification and short quips rather than thoughtful, attentive dialogue. Real understanding requires the patience to carefully listen without planning your next comeback.
- Listening requires obedience, whether it is to the Word of God, to our boss at work, or to our own friends and family.

"Obedience" vs. Mindfulness

- The word "obey" falls in the same semantic range as the word "mind" (as in "mind your manners" or "mind your step"). Sometimes people have adverse reactions to the word "obey" but they don't have similar issues with the word "mind." Why?
- The word "mind" implies thoughtfulness on a matter, whereas "obey" implies mindless compliance. When we obey God, it is not mindless, but we have taken thoughtful consideration and come to the conclusion that it is in our best interest to heed His Word. What does Proverbs 19:27 say happens when we stop listening to God?

"Us" vs. "Them"

- Read Joshua 5:13-15
 - What is Joshua's question to the commander, and what is the commander's response?
- In talking with others about whichever "divisive issue du jour", how quick are you to form an "us" vs. "them" mentality? Do you think this sort of mentality helps, or hinders conversation?
- Can you identify an example in Scripture of Jesus correcting a person who is gravely mistaken about an issue or situation? Describe it.

Jonah vs. Nineveh

- Read Jonah chapter 4
 - What is Jonah's response to God showing compassion to the Ninevites?
- Why did God show compassion to the Ninevites?
- Do you have a Nineveh – a person or a group of people whom, if you were completely honest with yourself, you find difficult to love?
- How does God's response to Jonah speak to our "Ninevehs?"

Listening to be Wise

- Proverbs 19:20 says, "Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise..." This wisdom is not referring to worldly wisdom, but Godly wisdom. Godly wisdom results from accepting instruction from God and putting that learning into practice.
- What results have you seen from conversations in which the people involved displayed an obvious lack of wisdom in handling the dialog?

Practical Steps for Listening

- Check your motive - "Am I just arguing to prove that I'm right?"
- Provide an opportunity for the other person to explain their viewpoint without interruption.
- Engage in clarifying questions to better understand the person's position.
- If necessary, repeat their statements back to them.
- Be aware of your body language and its effects in the specific cultural situation.
- While listening, find anything on which you can agree.

Subjective vs. Objective



Casey Nocket, graffiti artist, pled guilty to defiling rock formations and was subsequently banned from all national parks in the U.S.

Subjective vs. Objective

- Subjective statement: a statement that is about the subject (person), but is not necessarily about the object it references.
 - Ex. "Chocolate ice cream is better than vanilla."
- Objective statement: a statement that is about the object, not about the subject's personal opinion or preferences.
 - Ex. "The ice cream in the bowl is chocolate."

Subjective vs. Objective



- Why do you think knowing the difference between subjective and objective statements is important when listening to others?
- A subjective statement can be true for one person and false for another. An objective statement is either true or false, but it cannot be both true and false.
- When giving subjective statements, the speaker often leaves out a vital part such as "in my opinion..."

Subjective vs. Objective

- Determine whether the following statements are subjective or objective:
 - Babies need food to grow
 - Roses are the best flower to give your wife
 - The most beautiful color is green
 - Jesus is God

Subjective vs. Objective

- Why can't the statement "Jesus is God" be both true and false at the same time?
- 3 laws of logic to consider:
 - The law of identity: a thing is what it is
 - The law of non-contradiction: a thing is not what it is not
 - The law of the excluded middle: a thing either is or is not.

Subjective vs. Objective



- If "Jesus is God" can be true for me and false for someone else, then we open up the possibility that Jesus is whatever anyone prefers Him to be.
- Therefore, Jesus can be:
 - God
 - Just a prophet
 - One of many gods
 - A myth
 - A good teacher
- According to the laws of logic, to say that Jesus is all of the above would be illogical; it is absurd.

Subjective vs. Objective



- The difficulty of conversation lies in:
 - 1) hearing the difference between subjective and objective statements and
 - 2) showing a person that a difference of belief does not mean that we are all making subjective statements about our beliefs.

Subjective vs. Objective

- Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-20
 - What does the Apostle Paul claim in verse 14?
 - What is the implication of verse 19?
 - Why is it important that Paul's statement is objective and not subjective?
- Read Matthew 12:30
 - What does Jesus claim here?
 - Is Jesus giving a subjective or objective statement?
 - What is the implication of Jesus' claim?