



[Home](#) [About](#) [Apply](#) [Resources](#)

Issue 56 — Listen Without Trying to Fix It

Messy Story of the Week

Daniel came home from work quieter than usual.

When Maya asked what was wrong, he told her that his supervisor had changed the deadline on an important project. Daniel had already rearranged his week once, and now he wasn't sure how he could finish everything without disappointing his team.

Maya immediately began sorting through solutions.

"Could you delegate part of it?"

Daniel shook his head.

"What if you worked from home tomorrow? Or told your supervisor the deadline isn't realistic?"

"I've already thought about those things," Daniel said.

Maya felt irritated. *Why tell me about the problem if you don't want my help?*

"You shoot down every suggestion I make," she said. "I don't know what you expect me to do."

Daniel stopped talking.

Later that evening, Maya returned to the conversation.

"I think I started solving the problem before I understood what you needed from me," she said. "Do you want help thinking through options, or do you need me to listen?"

"I need to talk it through," Daniel answered. "I'm worried that no matter what I do, someone will think I let them down."

The deadline was the problem Daniel described, but disappointing people was the fear he was wrestling with.

Maya's suggestions weren't bad. They simply arrived before Daniel felt understood.

This time, she did not offer another solution. She said, "That sounds like a lot of responsibility to carry. Tell me more about what you think could happen."

And Daniel began talking again.

Faithful God Then and Now

"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." — James 1:19

On the road to Emmaus, two discouraged disciples were discussing the death of Jesus when Jesus Himself began walking beside them.

He already knew what had happened. He understood the Scriptures they were struggling to interpret, and He knew the truth they could not yet see.

But He did not begin with a correction or explanation.

He asked, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

Then He allowed them to tell their story.

Jesus eventually helped them understand what had happened, but first He made room for them to speak. He listened to their disappointment,

confusion, and lost expectations before offering instruction.

We often reverse that order in our families.

We hear enough of the problem to recognize a possible solution, and we begin explaining, advising, correcting, or defending. We may sincerely want to help, but our urgency can interrupt the other person's process of understanding and expressing what is happening inside them.

Faithful listening does not mean that we never offer wisdom. It means we listen long enough to know what kind of response is actually needed.

What We Can Learn

- **Listening and solving are different steps.** Advice may eventually be helpful, but understanding usually needs to come first.
- **The problem someone names may not be the whole struggle.** Daniel talked about a deadline, but underneath it was a fear of disappointing people. Patient listening helped bring that deeper concern into the conversation.
- **Unrequested advice can sound like correction.** Even a good suggestion may communicate, "You should already know how to handle this," when the person simply needs room to think aloud.
- **Listening does not require passivity.** We can ask thoughtful questions, reflect what we hear, and clarify what the other person means without taking control of the conversation.
- **We can ask what kind of support is wanted.** A simple question—"Would you like ideas, or would it help if I listened?"—can prevent frustration for both people.

Behind the Curtain

In coaching, I often see caring people move too quickly into fixing because they are uncomfortable watching someone they love struggle.

Sometimes advice is an attempt to reduce our own discomfort. If we can solve the problem, perhaps the sadness, frustration, uncertainty, or tension will go away.

Over-carrying can hide inside helpfulness too. We begin working harder on the problem than the person who brought it to us. We take responsibility for finding the answer, improving the mood, or preventing every disappointing outcome.

Faithful presence looks different.

It says:

- "I am willing to hear what you are carrying."
- "I do not have to make this feeling disappear."
- "I can care without taking over."
- "We can decide together whether a solution is needed."

Listening also helps us stop responding only to the words and begin understanding the thoughts beneath them.

Try questions like:

- "What feels hardest about this?"
- "What are you most concerned might happen?"
- "What do you wish I understood?"
- "What have you already considered?"
- "Would you like help thinking through this, or do you need me to listen?"

The purpose is not to conduct an interview. One sincere question followed by patient silence may be enough.

Faithful Family Tools

Are you wondering whether your family could benefit from additional support?

The “Do We Need Coaching?” assessment can help you consider what is happening in your relationships and determine an appropriate next step:

[Take the assessment](#)

Do conversations in your home escalate before anyone feels heard?

The No Yelling Challenge offers practical support for interrupting reactive patterns and building calmer ways of responding:

[Join the No Yelling Challenge](#)

Faith Step for the Week

Bible Passage

Read James 1:19–20.

Pay attention to the order James gives us: quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Consider which part is most difficult for you when someone you love is struggling.

Two-Minute Practice

The next time your spouse or child brings you a problem, pause before offering advice.

Ask:

“Would you like help finding a solution, or would it help if I listened?”

If the answer is “listen,” give the person two uninterrupted minutes.

You may ask one follow-up question:

“What feels hardest about this?”

Resist planning your response while the other person is speaking.

When they finish, reflect one thing you heard:

“It sounds like you are worried that...”

Then allow them to clarify whether you understood correctly.

Prayer

Faithful God, You are patient and attentive when I bring my burdens to You. Teach me to offer that same patience to the people I love. Help me listen without rushing to correct, defend, or take control. Give me wisdom to know when advice is needed and humility to remain quiet when presence is the better gift. Show me how to care without carrying responsibilities that are not mine. Amen.

Coming Next

Next week, we will explore how to respond when we understand what our spouse or child is experiencing but do not agree with the way they see the situation. We will learn how to affirm someone's experience without pretending that every interpretation, conclusion, or choice is true or wise.

Did you miss an issue?

[Check out the newsletter archive](#)

Faithful Family Coaching

1801 North Osage BLVD

Nevada, MO 64772



You received this email because you signed up on our website or made a purchase from us.

[Unsubscribe](#)

