

Notes from A Listening Ear
Chapel Downtown; September 2020

A Journey of Learning to Listen (1979-)

Do you have a friend (most of us have 1) who calls to talk...and I mean just that. She or he calls to TALK. If you do get to squeeze anything in, she doesn't really listen but is just waiting for you to stop so she can talk again

Relationship: Our prayer times, even ongoing prayer all day, often tends to be one-sided. We babble, He listens. But what kind of relationship thrives with one-sided 'conversations'. By definition, a conversation goes two ways...a **dialogue** (di being a prefix for 2).

Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

- **How can so many Christians be deceived?** So many vehemently believe polar opposite things about issues today? **Self-righteous indignation** and **intellectual arrogance**. One litmus test is the vitriolic, venomous, hateful speech coming out of people's mouths. Out of the heart the mouth speaks, Jesus said. No matter how **'tight' we once were** with God, if we've been riding along on that for a long time, **resting on our laurels**, so to speak...**caught up in life...** we're in danger of...
- **Drawing on the well of their own understanding.** This could happen to us, too, more quickly than we think. **If we're not spending time with and in the Spirit**, our minds can take us, with just a slight turn in the road, to a completely different destination, especially in these days. We might even be **taking a right stand with a wrong attitude**. We think we're in the right place, but we've landed ourselves in a place of deception.
- ***There is a way that appears to be right,***
but in the end it leads to death —Proverbs 14:12
 - ***For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine and accurate instruction [that challenges them with God's truth]; but wanting to have their ears tickled [with something pleasing], they will accumulate for themselves [many] teachers [one after another, chosen] to satisfy their own desires and to support the errors they hold,***
--2 Timothy 4:3

- Do we just **THINK** we know what God thinks? Or did we actually **ASK** him and write down His answer, without supplying our own thoughts? [aside from issues clearly delineated in His Word]
 - How do we prevent this from happening? Lord, show us where we're in deception. Show us what is right, how You see things... But how do we do that, exactly?
 - Listening during **prayer time** vs **ongoing prayer**

Listening for various **purposes**

- decision-making
- understanding the Word
- understanding the times
- **anything God wants to say to us**

Rabbit ears: hearing through the noise (external and internal)

Ways of Hearing

- **Words** in the mind
- **Pictures** in the mind
 - Clear, sharp technicolor pictures
 - Images like a Monet (Impressionist! painting)
- **Impressions** in their spirits (the peace or lack thereof)
- **Gestalt! Apprehension vs Comprehension; Discernment**
- For example, you're reading The Word. He stops you on a verse or word and suddenly you see a familiar passage differently...or you realize you don't really believe or understand its truth and you ask Him about it. You don't just keep reading to get the chapter read and "check! Now let's go get stuff done." You're reading with a listening ear (Mark 11:21 above). You see a passage with a completely new understanding.
- **Spiritual Discernment:** Ever walk into a building and you cannot get out fast enough? Something may seem right logically or from the outside, but the Holy Spirit will stir in is, warning us..."no, don't go that way" for no 'logical' reason. (We could spend the whole time today just looking at places in Scripture where the Holy Spirit directed people...ways that they never could have known on their own. [Proverbs 3:5-6])

Ways to Record:

- **Writing** in a **Journal**

- Some people hate to write by hand. For some, it's much more intimate than typing. You can easily tuck into a chair with your Bible and a journal. Do what works best for you.
- **Typing in a device**
- **Recording yourself** saying out loud what you believe you've heard
- **Drawing** pictures (stick figures fine)

How To's

- **Quieting your soul**
- **"Taking dictation"** (remember the secretaries of the past)
- **Brainstorm:** Once you begin to hear words in your mind, don't try to practice 'quality control' yet. Just write. No one else will see what you write. God won't be upset you got it wrong at first. He's happy you're trying to hear Him. It's similar to moving a rolling object. First, Patience, then 'let it roll'!
- **Wheat and chaff.** It will become apparent quickly when it is He speaking.
- **Write or record til He stops talking.**
- **Then let the conversation begin!** ("Really, Lord? You're so funny. Did you really just say that? I didn't know You used slang! Lord, I'm not sure I understand. Ok, then what do I do now? Wow! That's awesome! But I'm afraid. Ok, I know what You're going to say to that!")
- **Patience:** We're all in too much of a rush. "Lord, I'm willing to **wait.** " We don't think we can hear Him because we don't wait.
- Just as in human conversations, it works best if you **stay quiet until the other person is ready to speak**
- **Perseverance**
- **Faith and belief** (there's a difference). Do we really **believe He wants to talk to us and have faith that we are able to hear Him?** You have **faith** in your heart but **believe** up here (head) they can be at war with each other, like two horses pulling in opposite directions.
- **Comprehension vs Apprehension**
- It gets **easier to hear, the more you listen.**
- Sometimes I can't write fast enough to keep up with Him. Sometimes I struggle to get a word or two.
- **BE with Him happily.** Is there someone whose company you enjoy without needing to talk? Soak Him in through your spiritual pores.
- I'm learning to be **silent and listen before I pray for someone else.**
- **Ask Him to help** you hear Him clearly
- **Pray in the Spirit;** then be quiet and listen

- Don't be surprised at **His sense of humor** (where do you think we got ours?)

Distractions

- The biggest reason I need to write when I'm listening, besides being able to reread what He said to me (or what I think He said to me) is to **keep me focused**.
- I don't know about you, but as soon as I start to pray (speaking or listening), I think things like 'I forgot to call so and so about such and such.' Or 'I forgot to put the laundry in. Or, I should probably get the dishwasher started before the food hardens on.' Or I keep forgetting to make that dentist appointment.' Or, distractions of my own thoughts on the issue at hand...what I think He thinks, what or what think is right...or how those so and so's are behaving
- My solution? I **jot down** those quick reminders on the opposite page of my journal, so I won't be anxious about remembering them afterwards. I can scan my jottings then and get them done.
- Sometimes, they're not distractions I'm writing down, but **ideas He gave me** or things I need to do to **follow up on His direction**. ("Call Joe...alone, need food?) ("blog idea...job idea...creative endeavor....

Testing What You've Heard:

- Take Another Look at Guidance by Bob Mumford. **3 harbor lights** (the Word, the Spirit, the body of Christ)
- **Humility**
- **Don't rest on your laurels**. Amazing Christians have been deceived and fallen away.
- Test what you think you've heard, if it is direct guidance for a decision. We can get it wrong. **We can write what we want to hear. We can even write what we don't want to hear** (condemnation from the enemy, for example').
- What you hear from God will **never violate His Word**. Adultery is ok if your spouse is mean, stealing is justified if it's from a big company, murdering babies 'to help' yourself or someone else is a difficult but right choice. You're not hearing the Shepherd's voice; you're hearing the enemy's.
- When dealing with life-changing decisions or stances, **talk with another mature believer...**ask him to listen to the Holy Spirit about the issue
- Two sincere believers can 'hear' contradictory things. If the Bible doesn't directly address the issue, we need to be humble enough to seek out the counsel of others. **No one hears perfectly. We have 'stuff' that gets in the way.**

- Don't assume you know what God's will is, unless it's addressed straightforwardly in His Word.
- Beware of **intellectual arrogance**. (Think of those whom we see as surprisingly deceived.) They see themselves as intelligently compassionate and yet are in grave error
- We may even be **right but have a wrong attitude**. God hates arrogance
- **The more time we spend soaking in the presence of God, the less vile and out of control will be our attitudes, speech, thoughts, and responses**
- It will be the Truth spoken by and in the strength firmness and love of the Holy Spirit.
- ***We can demolish every deceptive fantasy that opposes God and break through every arrogant attitude that is raised up in defiance of the true knowledge of God. We capture, like prisoners of war, every thought and insist that it bow in obedience to the Anointed One.*** –2 Corinthians 10:5-7
- ***I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.*** –Colossians 2:3
- The more time you spend with Him, **not just READING His Word, but BEING with Him, soaked in His Holy Spirit, the more you will APPREHEND His will in a situation.** You're less likely to be deceived by 'fine sounding arguments'
- **Keep seeking to listen to God wholeheartedly, even if you get it wrong sometimes.** You will. We all will. **He will be so pleased you want to hear what He has to say.** He desires an intimate friendship with us.

I have never called you 'servants,' because a master doesn't confide in his servants, and servants don't always understand what the master is doing. But I call you my most intimate friends, for I reveal to you everything that I've heard from my Father.
 –John 15:15 TPT

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