

## LEARNING TO LISTEN

During a wedding reception at his house, Peter stepped outside for a moment to escape the noise and the crowd. He noticed one of the ushers in the walkway with his head cocked, looking intently at some plantings nearby. He asked him, 'What's up?' and wondered if he was planning some escapade for the bride and groom.

The answer came back, 'Mr. Lord, do you know you have 18 different kinds of crickets in those bushes?'. Peter stared at him blankly and realized that he had never consciously heard a cricket at the house where he had lived for many years.

The young man was a graduate student of entomology (study of insects) at the University of Florida and had learned to distinguish over 200 different types of cricket calls with his natural ear. It was vital to his future career to pay attention to such things. .

God seems to emphasize the importance of hearing in the way he created us.

**The ear is the first of the five sensory organs to function in the womb and the last to stop functioning at death.**

I know of husbands and wives who have spoken scripture and words of life to their unborn child while it is in the womb, for they can hear! When Mary greeted Elizabeth, baby John (the Baptist) leaped in the womb - Luke 1:39-41.

Those who are in a coma or near death can often hear words spoken around them even though their other senses are diminished or absent. Words of hope, life and encouragement can mean a lot.

Jesus knew the **importance of listening** as He was led by the Holy Spirit and spent much time communing with his Father in heaven. It is evident that he desires for us to have the same experience because He emphasized it 7 times in Revelation and on 3 different occasions in the gospels:

**He that has ears to hear.....let him hear.**

In the Old Testament, God gave warnings to his people through the prophets, but they were often hard hearted, rebellious, foolish, senseless and had closed their ears. Isaiah 48:8, Jeremiah 5:21 and 6:10, Ezekiel 12:2. However, **Jesus came to restore hearing to his people.**

See, a king will reign in righteousness.....then the eyes of those who see will no longer be closed, and the **ears** of those who hear will **listen**. - Isaiah 32:1, 3

I have other sheep that are not of this pen (that's us!). I must bring them also. They too will **listen** to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. My sheep **listen** to my voice; I know them, and they **follow** me.

- John 10:16, 27

**The most important parable of Jesus is about hearing.** - Mark 4:1-20. We will explore the subject of how to improve our hearing in our next lesson, but for now I will share one example I had in this process of learning to listen.

### **November 1982 Bradenton Auditorium in Florida**

During the early 1980's several charismatic type churches came together for 3 nights each Thanksgiving to hear a special speaker. This particular year it was Peter Lord from the Park Avenue Baptist church in Titusville, Florida. The focus of his ministry was on hearing the voice of God and walking with him as a disciple of Jesus. I arrived late to one of the meetings where about 1000 people were in attendance as Peter spoke about hearing the voice of God. Near the end of the service he asked us to listen for something God may want to say to us.

Since I had missed the offering time in the service, God impressed to me that I should go forward after the service and give a dollar to someone in charge. As I made my way forward towards the middle aisle from the back, I was going against the flow of the crowd moving in the opposite direction. I was only part way forward when I spotted Steve Crandell, a Canadian and a fellow student with me in the pastoral training course at Christian Retreat for the year. As soon as we met, the words came out of my mouth as I handed him the dollar in my hand:

**I think I'm supposed to give this to you!**

After he received the money, he told me the significance of this. During the time when Peter Lord had asked us to wait on the Lord for a word, God had told Steve that he should repay the lunch money he had taken from his boss at work that day which came to a total of \$1.50. However, when God spoke to Steve about this he only had 50 cents in his pocket. What are the odds that God would lead me to give one dollar to the one person in a 1000 who needed that exact amount?

Did you notice the words before that Jesus gave us.....

My sheep **hear** my voice....and they **follow** me.

Sometimes the Lord prompts us to do things that may seem unusual to our minds, but we are to be led by the mind of Christ.....not by our small minded thinking.

**Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.**

**- Romans 8:5-6**

***Those who are led by the Spirit are the  
(mature) sons of God. - Romans 8:14***

Jesus has promised us abundant life....life to the fullest. - John 10:10. He takes us out of boring, predictable and lifeless religion and into the greatest adventure ever..... listening to His words and following him.

The graduate student found it vital to learn the various sounds of insects. Is it not even more important that followers of Jesus learn to tune in to his various ways of speaking to us?  
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