

## Benefits and Principles of Listening

### Introduction

Isaiah says that the Lord gave him the tongue of a disciple, so that he knew how to sustain the weary one with a word. He goes on to say that the Lord awakens him every morning to listen as a disciple. Isaiah learned to be a good communicator. He knew how to use his tongue wisely, and he knew how to be a good listener.

(Isaiah 50:4) "The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple."

As disciples, God wants all of us to be good communicators. He wants us to learn to listen to Him. Last week we looked at some of the many ways that God speaks to us. He speaks to us directly. He speaks to us through thoughts and impressions. He speaks to us through feelings, sensations, and other manifestations. He speaks to us through kings and others in authority. He speaks to us through prophets and angels. He also speaks to us through dreams and visions. God is not limited in the ways that He uses to communicate with us.

He also wants us to learn to be good communicators in our relationships with one another. He wants us to have good listening skills with Him, and with one another. This morning I want to focus on our listening skills with one another. Because He wants us to be good communicators, He spends a lot of time teaching us about our words and our listening. For example, there are 915 verses in Proverbs. There are 146 verses on our mouth or our words that we speak. That is 15.9% of the book. There are 106 verses on listening or 11.6%. In all, there are 241 on communication or 26.3%. God is very concerned with our communication, and particularly about what we say.

First, we will look at some of the benefits of listening. Second, we will look at some principles of listening.

### Benefits of Listening

#### 1. Secure life

(Pro 1:33) ""But he who listens to me shall live securely, And shall be at ease from the dread of evil.""

(Isa 55:3) ""Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, According to the faithful mercies shown to David.""

#### 2. Blessings from the Lord.

(Pro 8:32) ""Now therefore, O sons, listen to me, For blessed are they who keep my ways.""

(Pro 8:34) ""Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at my doorposts.""

#### 3. Wisdom

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(Pro 12:15) "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel."

(Pro 13:1) "A wise son accepts his father's discipline, But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke."

(Pro 15:31-32) "He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof Will dwell among the wise. {32} He who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding."

(Pro 19:20) "Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days."

(Pro 23:19) "Listen, my son, and be wise, And direct your heart in the way."

### 4. Straight and narrow path.

(Pro 19:27) "Cease listening, my son, to discipline, And you will stray from the words of knowledge."

### 5. Attractive quality

(Pro 25:12) "Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold Is a wise reprover to a listening ear."

### 6. More effective prayer life

(Pro 28:9) "He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination."

### 7. Reconciliation with others

(Matt 18:15) ""And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother."

## Principles of Listening

1. We must listen with the right attitude. If we seem impatient, insincere, or without giving full attention, people pick up on our attitude quickly, and communication will stop. Paul wrote that our words need to be seasoned with grace so that we will know how to respond. Gracious speech comes from a gracious attitude. When we season our speech with grace, people open up. Then, we will be able to listen to the person. If our words are judgmental, condemning, or harsh, people will not open up. It all begins with having the right attitude.

(Col 4:6) "Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."

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2. We must learn to ask good questions. Jesus was a Master of asking good questions. Even when He was a youth, He was in the temple asking questions. Throughout His earthly ministry, He continually asked questions. In fact, Jesus asked 307 questions in the gospels. He was asked 183 questions, and He only answered three. Asking questions was central to Jesus' life and teachings. Asking good questions gets the other person to talk, which allows us to listen. Asking questions communicates to the other person that we want to hear what they have to say. It values the other person's ideas, thoughts, and input. There are different types of questions, and we must learn how to use all the different types of questions.

(Luke 2:46-47) "Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. {47} And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers."

For example, there are closed-ended questions that only require a yes or no. "Were you at the demonstration in Dallas this week?" You were either there or you were not there. These are good for interrogators, but they do not invite conversation. Jesus used a closed-ended question to ask the chief priests, scribes and elders a question. They had asked Him a question, "by what authority are you doing these things?" He answered them with a closed-ended question, "Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men?"

(Mark 11:29-30) "And Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. {30} Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me."

Then, there are open-ended questions that demand more than a yes or no question. "What were you doing at the demonstration? Why were you there? What did you see at the demonstration? How did the events that happened make you feel?" These are all open-ended questions that demand more than a yes or no answer. Jesus asked His disciples an open-ended question, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They gave Him a number of answers. Then, He gave them a follow-up question about who they thought He was. He is opening up their hearts through questions. He is finding out what they believe. Jesus was good at asking both kinds of questions.

(Matt 16:13-16) "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" {14} And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." {15} He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" {16} Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

3. We must incline our ears. Jeremiah 7:26

Jer 7:26 ""Yet they did not listen to Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck; they did evil more than their fathers."

4. We must listen carefully. Isaiah 55:2

Isa 55:2 ""Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance."

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5. We must listen attentively. Jeremiah 17:24

Jer 17:24 ""But it will come about, if you listen attentively to Me," declares the LORD, "to bring no load in through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but to keep the sabbath day holy by doing no work on it,"

6. We must listen closely. Ezekiel 3:10

Ezek 3:10 "Moreover, He said to me, "Son of man, take into your heart all My words which I shall speak to you, and listen closely."

7. We must listen patiently. Acts 26:3

Acts 26:3 "especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently."

8. We must listen with silence. Acts 15:12

Acts 15:12 "And all the multitude kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles."

9. We must be quick to listen. James 1:19

James 1:19 "This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;"

10. We must listen with a heart of obedience. Deut 21:18, James 1:22, Matt 7:24-27

Mat 7:24-27 ""Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. {25} "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. {26} "And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. {27} "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall.""

James 1:22 "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves."

Deu 21:18-21 ""If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, he will not even listen to them, {19} then his father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his home town. {20} "And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey us, he is a glutton and a drunkard.' {21} "Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall remove the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear of it and fear."

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11. We must listen with discernment. Num 30:3-5

Num 30:3-5 ""Also if a woman makes a vow to the LORD, and binds herself by an obligation in her father's house in her youth, {4} and her father hears her vow and her obligation by which she has bound herself, and her father says nothing to her, then all her vows shall stand, and every obligation by which she has bound herself shall stand. {5} "But if her father should forbid her on the day he hears of it, none of her vows or her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the LORD will forgive her because her father had forbidden her."

12. We must listen with our pens in hand. Jer 30:1-2

Jer 30:1-2 "The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, {2} "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Write all the words which I have spoken to you in a book.'"

13. We must listen completely. Prov 18:13

Prov 18:13 "He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him."

14. We must listen with our hearts. Exo 8:15, Isa 51:7, Ezek 3:10, Mal 2:2

Exo 8:15 "But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, as the LORD had said."

Isa 51:7 ""Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, A people in whose heart is My law; Do not fear the reproach of man, Neither be dismayed at their revilings."

Ezek 3:10 "Moreover, He said to me, "Son of man, take into your heart all My words which I shall speak to you, and listen closely."

Mal 2:2 ""If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name," says the LORD of hosts, "then I will send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; and indeed, I have cursed them already, because you are not taking it to heart."

## Listening As A Disciple (Is 50:4)

### Benefits of Listening

1. Secure \_\_\_\_\_ (Pro 1:33, Isa 55:3)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ from the Lord. (Pro 8:32, 8:34)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (Pro 12:15, 13:1, 15:31-32, 19:20, 23:19)
4. Straight and narrow \_\_\_\_\_. (Pro 19:27)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ quality (Pro 25:12)
6. More effective \_\_\_\_\_ (Pro 28:9)
7. \_\_\_\_\_ with others (Matt 18:15)

### Principles of Listening

1. We must listen with the right \_\_\_\_\_. (Col 4:6)
2. We must learn to ask good \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 2:46-47, Mark 11:29-30, Mark 16:13-16)
3. We must \_\_\_\_\_ our ears. (Jer 7:26)
4. We must listen \_\_\_\_\_. (Isa 55:2)
5. We must listen \_\_\_\_\_. (Jer 17:24)
6. We must listen \_\_\_\_\_. (Eze 3:10)
7. We must listen \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 26:3)
8. We must listen with \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 15:12)
9. We must be \_\_\_\_\_ to listen. (James 1:19)
10. We must listen with a heart of \_\_\_\_\_. (Deut 21:18, James 1:22, Matt 7:24-27)
11. We must listen with \_\_\_\_\_. (Num 30:3-5)
12. We must listen with our \_\_\_\_\_ in hand. (Jer 30:1-2)
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