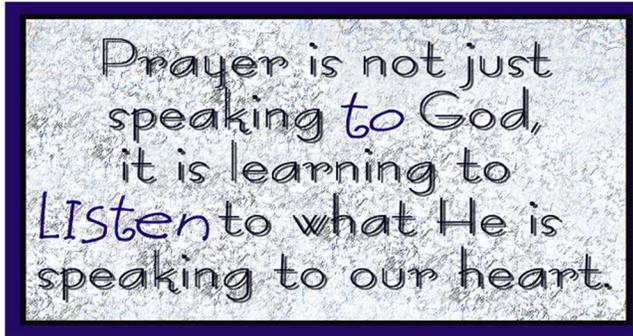


Lord, Teach Me to Listen



Key Scripture:

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word,
and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life,
and does not come into judgment,
but has passed out of death into life.
John 5:24 (NASB77)*

Today's Portion for the Journey:

One of the most important aspects of any relationship is good communication! Communication requires the engagement of two parties, the one who is sending the message and the one who receives the message. Have you ever found yourself talking only to discover the other person is not listening? Anyone who has had children can tell you there is a vast difference between being able to "hear" and being able to "listen." The Hebrew word for 'hear' takes this into account. In Deuteronomy 6:4-5 the Lord calls His people to *"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the Lord is one! And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."* This verse is called the "SHEMA" and formed the basic confession of faith in Judaism. Shema is the Hebrew word for "hear" and it means to hear intelligently with the implication of attentiveness and obedience, to carefully and diligently consider or hearken to the words which are spoken. The Shema was recited as a prayer morning and night, calling the people to uncompromising worship of God alone, and a total love commitment.

Having ears that are tuned to listen to the Lord is vital to deepening our relationship with Him. There are some practical things that we can do to improve our ability to listen and recognize His voice.

As a speech therapist, I frequently used to work with people who are hard of hearing and I found myself often working with couples where one person was hard of hearing, but the problem affected both individuals. As I thought about it, I realized that the techniques I taught them also apply to improving our ability to communicate with the LORD. There are definitely certain conditions that will improve our ability to hear the voice of the LORD.

Digging Deeper in the Word:

1. **Do you want to hear?** Many of the communication problems between the hard of hearing individual and their spouse were based on the fact that the "hearing impaired" individual was not motivated to listen. Men who could hear the TV perfectly well could not hear their wives... The same is true of the LORD! We have to want to hear what He is saying to us!! We need to listen with the intention of responding in obedience to what He speaks to our hearts. 1 Sam. 3:9-10; Jer. 6:10; Jer. 15:16; Hab. 2:1-3; Ps. 95:7-9
2. **Draw Near!** When we want to listen to what someone is saying, we must make the conscious decision to draw closer to them. It is nearly impossible for a hearing-impaired person to listen to someone speaking from afar off. God gives us the incredible promise that if we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us. James 4:8; Heb. 4:16; Heb. 7:25; Isa. 34:1; Eccles. 5:1
3. **Find a place to be alone** in order to eliminate all distractions. It is much harder to hear in a crowded place where there are many voices competing for your attention. Jesus gave us such a beautiful example of withdrawing into the wilderness to be alone with the Father. He instructed us to go into our closet and shut the door. That means to turn off the "noise" that can cloud our hearing! This may mean to physically to put away your cell phone, get away from your computer, turn off the radio or the TV.... Matt. 6:6; Luke 5:16
4. **A well-lighted room is essential. Sit facing one another.** The light reveals one's facial expressions which helps to more correctly interpret the message. To hear the LORD, we must come into the light with a willingness to allow Him to show us our sin. We draw near to the LORD. James 4:8; Jer. 23:16-22; 1 John 1:7; Ps. 31:16; Ps. 119:135
5. **Give them your full and undivided attention.** The "hard of hearing" person must decide that it is important to make the effort to listen to the speaker. Ask the LORD to awaken your ears to listen! True listening requires an alertness to the still small voice of the Lord. Deut 26:16-17 (AMP); Isaiah 55:1-3; Ps. 119:148; Isa. 50:4
6. **Wear your hearing aid!** Many individuals with hearing deficits have hearing aids but do not choose to use them. We also have an "aide" who is called our "helper" who will help to amplify the words of the LORD in our hearts. It is the Holy Spirit. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to hear what He is speaking. Ask to be filled with His Spirit and let Him guide you along the way in discerning the voice of the Shepherd! 1 John 4:13
7. **"Be Still."** It is impossible for us to listen carefully to another if we are talking non-stop. Waiting on the LORD with listening ears requires that we be quiet and tune our ears to see what He will speak. We must seek to set aside a quiet time each day so we can draw close to the LORD. It also means that we would "be still" in our hearts by focusing on the LORD and His Word and taking control of competing thoughts. If those urgent thoughts continue to press in, turn them into prayers and give each one to the Lord. Ps. 46:10; Ps. 37:7
8. **We will always understand those we know better than strangers.** The more you know and spend time with the other person, the easier it is to understand what they are saying. You learn to understand their nuances, their humor, the things they love to talk about and the way they

speak. Meditate on the promises for those who learn to listen and to hear His voice: Isa. 55:1-3; John 6:63

9. **True listening and the ability to discern the voice of the LORD developed through the discipline of “listening meditation.”** This is the practice of listening for the voice of the LORD as one reads the scriptures. A.B. Simpson in his book, “the Life of Prayer,” described this practice of learning to hear the “still small voice” while reading and meditating in the Word as, “an inexpressible tenderness, power and comfort. As I listened, it became to me the voice of prayer, and the voice of wisdom, and the voice of duty. I did not need to think so hard, or pray so hard or trust so hard but that the ‘still small voice’ of the Holy Spirit in my heart was God’s prayer in my secret soul, was God’s answer to all my questions, was God’s life and strength for soul and body, and became the substance for all knowledge, and all prayer and all blessing; for it was the Living God Himself as my strength and my all.”

What is the Lord speaking to me?

How do you want to respond to the LORD?