

Listening

WHY IS LISTENING SO IMPORTANT?

PROVERBS 1:8-9

Listening helps us grow and mature.

⁸Listen, my child,^o to what your father teaches you. Don't neglect your mother's teaching. ⁹What you learn from them will crown you with grace and clothe you with honor.

PROVERBS 5:13

Listening helps keep us accountable.

¹³Oh, why didn't I listen to my teachers? Why didn't I pay attention to those who gave me instruction?
¹⁴I have come to the brink of utter ruin, and now I must face public disgrace."

PROVERBS 2:1-9

Listening is essential to good decision-making.

¹My child,^o listen to me and treasure my instructions. ²Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. ³Cry out for insight and understanding. ⁴Search for them as you would for lost money or hidden treasure. ⁵Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD, and you will gain knowledge of God. ⁶For the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. ⁷He grants a treasure of good sense to the godly. He is their shield, protecting those who walk with integrity. ⁸He guards the paths of justice and protects those who are faithful to him.

⁹Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will know how to find the right course of action every time. ¹⁰For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy. ¹¹Wise planning will watch over you. Understanding will keep you safe.

PROVERBS 8:1-12

Listening keeps us from being closed-minded.

¹Listen as wisdom calls out! Hear as understanding raises her voice! ²She stands on the hilltop and at the crossroads. ³At the entrance to the city, at the city gates, she cries aloud, ⁴"I call to you, to all of you! I am raising my voice to all people. ⁵How naive you are! Let me give you common sense. O foolish ones, let me give you understanding. ⁶Listen to me! For I have excellent things to tell you. Everything I say is right, ⁷for I speak the truth and hate every kind of deception. ⁸My advice is wholesome and good. There is nothing crooked or twisted in it. ⁹My words are plain to anyone with understanding, clear to those who want to learn.

¹⁰"Choose my instruction rather than silver, and knowledge over pure gold. ¹¹For wisdom is far more valuable than rubies. Nothing you desire can be compared with it.

¹²"I, Wisdom, live together with good judgment. I know where to discover knowledge and discernment. ¹³

EXODUS 18:24; JOB 29:21-23

Listening shows that we respect others. It honors the words of others. There is something affirming about feeling that you've been listened to.

²⁴Moses listened to his father-in-law's advice and followed his suggestions.

²¹"Everyone listened to me and valued my advice. They were silent as they waited for me to speak. ²²And after I spoke, they had nothing to add, for my counsel satisfied them. ²³They longed for me to speak as they longed for rain. They waited eagerly, for my words were as refreshing as the spring rain. ²⁴When they were discouraged, I smiled at them. My look of approval was precious to them. ²⁵I told them what they should do and presided over them as their chief. I lived as a king among his troops and as one who comforts those who mourn

PROVERBS 21:13

Listening is more than hearing; it's a connecting with others. It helps us know where they are coming from.

¹³Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS WE SHOULDN'T LISTEN TO?

GENESIS 3:1-6; MATTHEW 6:13

Temptation.

¹Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the creatures the LORD God had made. "Really?" he asked the woman. "Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?"

²"Of course we may eat it," the woman told him. ³"It's only the fruit from the tree at the center of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God says we must not eat it or even touch it, or we will die."

⁴"You won't die!" the serpent hissed. ⁵"God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil."

⁶The woman was convinced. The fruit looked so fresh and delicious, and it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. Then he ate it, too.

¹³**And don't let us yield to temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.** ◦

LEVITICUS 19:16

Gossip.

¹⁶"Do not spread slanderous gossip among your people." ◦

2 PETER 2:1-3; MARK 13:21-23

False teaching.

¹But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach their destructive heresies about God and even turn against their Master who bought them. Theirs will be a swift and terrible end. ²Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of them, Christ and his true way will be slandered. ³In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction is on the way.

²¹“And then if anyone tells you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah,’ or, ‘there he is,’ don’t pay any attention.
²²For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform miraculous signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God’s chosen ones. ²³Watch out! I have warned you!

EPHESIANS 5:4; PROVERBS 12:18

Insults and off-color stories.

⁴Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God.

¹⁸Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing.

PROVERBS 13:5

Lies.

⁵Those who are godly hate lies; the wicked come to shame and disgrace.

PROVERBS 29:5

Flattery.

⁵To flatter people is to lay a trap for their feet.

HOW DO WE LISTEN TO GOD?

PSALM 4:3; PSALM 5:3

Through prayer.

³ You can be sure of this:
The LORD has set apart the godly for himself.
The LORD will answer when I call to him.

³ Listen to my voice in the morning, LORD.
Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly.

PSALM 46:10

Being quiet helps us hear God’s voice.

¹⁰ “Be silent, and know that I am God!
I will be honored by every nation.
I will be honored throughout the world.”

1 KINGS 19:12

God is big, so we expect him to speak with the voice of thunder or lightning or earthquake or fire. But God often expresses his powerful love in gentle whispers. Listen for God's whispers as well as his shouts.

¹²And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Promise from God: Proverbs 1:23

²³Come here and listen to me! I'll pour out the spirit of wisdom upon you and make you wise.