

“A Study in James”

Text: James 1:19a

James 1:19a – **“¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, always be willing to listen and slow to speak....”**

1. When we _____ too much and _____ too little, we communicate to others that we think our ideas are much more important than theirs.
2. Questions about listening? How good a listener are you?
 - A. Since you think about 4 times faster than a person usually talks, do you use this time to think about other things while you're keeping track of the conversation?
 - B. Do you listen primarily for facts rather than ideas when someone is speaking?
 - C. Do you avoid listening to things you feel will be too difficult to understand?
 - D. Can you tell from a person's appearance and delivery that there won't be anything worthwhile said?
 - E. When someone is talking to you do you appear to be paying attention when you're not?
 - F. Do certain words and phrases prejudice you so you cannot listen objectively?
 - G. When listening are you distracted by outside sights and sounds?
3. Lessons in Good Listening. (by Rev. David Mathis)
 - A. Good listening requires _____.
 - B. Good listening is an act of _____.
 - (1.) Poor listening _____; good listening embraces. Poor listening diminishes the other person, while good listening invites them to exist, and to matter.
 - (2.) Bonhoeffer writes, “Just as love to God begins with listening to his Word, so the beginning of love for the brethren is learning to _____ to them.”

(3.) Good listening goes hand in hand with the _____-set of Christ.

Philippians 2:5 – “In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus.”

(4.) It flows from a _____ heart that counts others more significant than ourselves.

Philippians 2:3 - “When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves.”

(5.) It looks not only to its own interests, but also the interests of _____.

Philippians 2:4 – “Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others.”

(6.) It is _____ and kind.

1 Corinthians 13:4 – “Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, and it is not proud.”

C. Good listening asks _____ questions.

(1.) Good listening asks perceptive, open-ended questions that don't tee up yes-no answers, but gently “peel the onion” and _____ beneath the surface.

(2.) Good listening _____ carefully for nonverbal communication, but doesn't interrogate and pry into details the speaker doesn't want to share, but meekly draws them out and helps point the speaker to fresh perspectives through careful, but genuine questions.

D. Good listening is ministry.

(1.) According to Bonhoeffer, there are many times when “listening can be a greater _____ than speaking.” God wants more of the Christian than just our good listening, but not less.

(2.) There will be days when the most important ministry we do is square our shoulders to some hurting person, uncross our arms, lean forward, make eye contact, and _____ their pain all the way to the bottom.

(3.) Good listening often _____ the emotions that are a part of the problem being discussed. Sometimes releasing these emotions is all that is needed to solve the problem. The speaker may neither want nor expect us to say anything in response.

E. Good listening prepares us to speak well.

(1.) The best ministry you might do today is to _____ to someone's pain all the way to the bottom."

(2.) Sometimes good listening only listens, and ministers best by keeping _____, but typically good listening readies us to minister words of grace to precisely the place where the other is in need. As Bonhoeffer writes, "We should _____ with the ears of God that we may speak the Word of God."

F. Good listening reflects our _____ with God.

(1.) Our inability to listen well to others may be symptomatic of a _____ spirit that is droning out the voice of God. Bonhoeffer warns, "He who can no longer listen to his brother will soon be no longer listening to God either; he will be doing nothing but prattle in the presence of God too. This is the beginning of the death of the _____ life."

(2.) Anyone who thinks that his time is too valuable to spend "keeping _____" will eventually have _____ time for God and his brother, but only for himself and for his own follies.



4. We should always be quick, _____ & eager – to listen to God, to His Word, & to each other. The person who is always talking & seldom listening is a proud man. He/she gives no regard to the thoughts of others.

Proverbs 4:20-21 states: "My child, pay attention to my words; listen closely to what I say. ²¹ Don't ever forget my words; keep them always in mind."