

# The Ministry of Listening

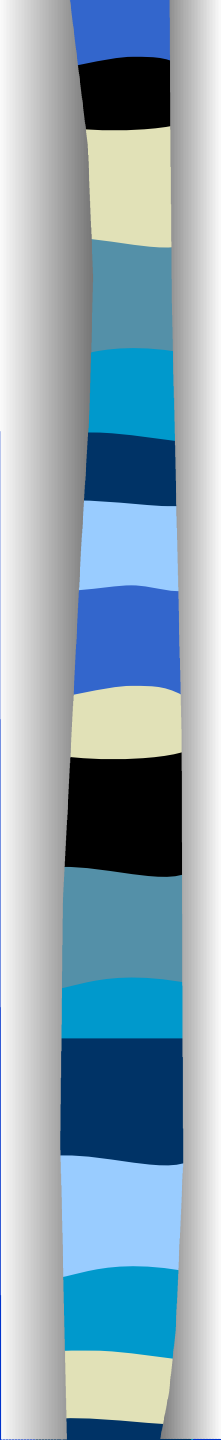
Marti Smith

Wabash Church

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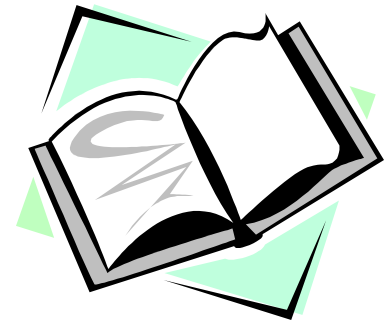
THE ENCOUNTERS GROUP  
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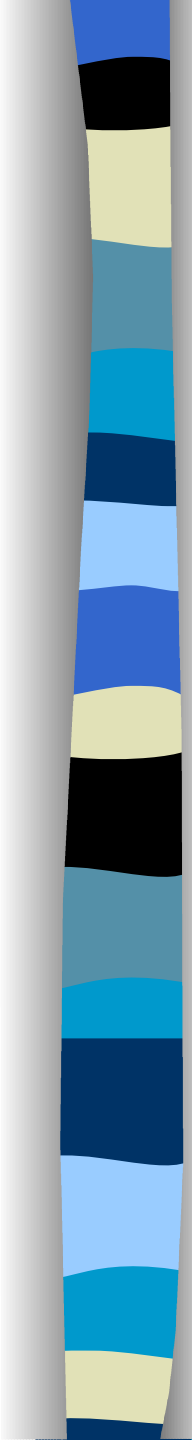


**As a writer and  
researcher, I make my  
living by listening. But  
I wonder if there's  
something biblical  
about it for all of us...**

# **What Does the Bible Say About Listening?**

- **Who should listen?**
- **Who should we listen to?**
- **How do we listen?**
  - **Let's start with Proverbs...**





Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding.

I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching.

When I was a boy in my father's house, still tender, and an only child of my mother,

He taught me and said, "Lay hold of my words with all your heart, keep my commands and you will live."

Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many.

I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble.

Hold onto instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life.

My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words.

Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart;

For they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body.



# More Proverbs...

The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man **listens** to advice. (Proverbs 12:15)

He who answers before **listening** – that is his folly and his shame. (Proverbs 18:13)

A fool finds no pleasure in **understanding** but delights in airing his own opinions. (Proverbs 18:2)

**Reckless words** pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Proverbs 12:18)

It is not good to have zeal without **knowledge**, nor to be hasty and miss the way. Proverbs 19:2

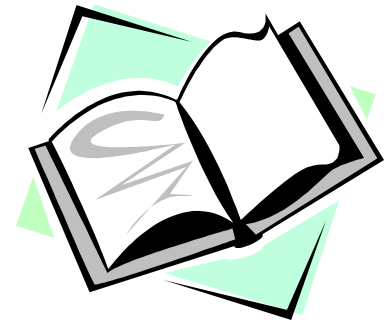
# What Does the Bible Say About Listening?

- Who should listen?
  - Wise people know to listen.
- Who should we listen to?
  - Listen to your dad (and others).
- What if you ARE the dad?



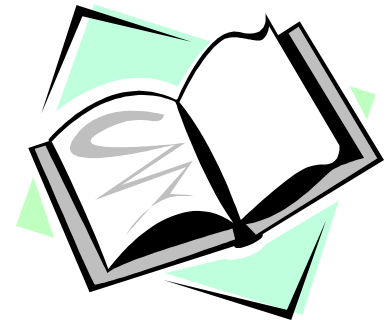
# **The Funny Thing Jesus Used to Say...**

- **Revelation 2:7**
- **Revelation 2:11**
- **Revelation 2:17**
- **Revelation 2:29**
- **Revelation 3:6**
- **Revelation 3:13**
- **Revelation 3:22**
- **Revelation 13:9**
- **Matthew 11:15**
- **Matthew 13:9**
- **Matthew 13:43**
- **Mark 4:9**
- **Luke 8:8**
- **Luke 14:35**



# **What Does the Bible Say About Listening?**

- **Who should listen?**
  - Wise people know to listen.
  - People with ears should listen.
- **Who should we listen to?**
  - Listen to your dad (and others).
  - Listen to God.







# Remember, Repeat

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)



# **Listen First, Speak Later**

My dear brothers, take note of this:

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. (James 1:19-21)



# Hold Your Tongue

If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (James 1:26-27)

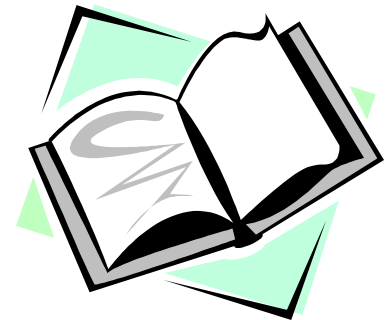
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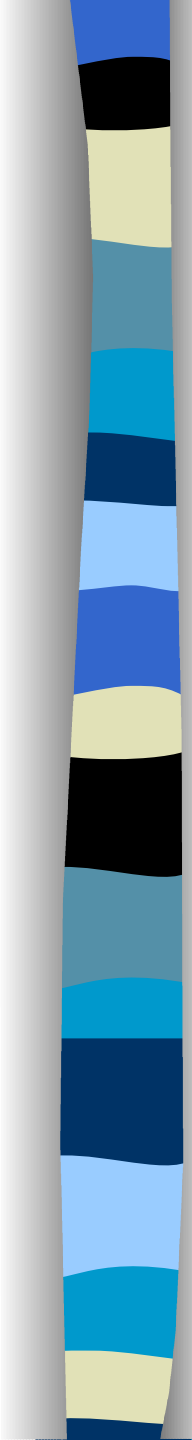
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# **What Does the Bible Say About Listening?**

- **How do we listen?**
  - **We pay attention and respond.**
  - **We repeat and remember.**
  - **We don't forget.**
  - **We keep a tight reign on our tongues.**
  - **We fight off anger and evil that would pollute our spirits and keep us from being able to do this.**





# Practical Skills



# Red Flags

- **Withdrawal / disengagement**
- **Lots of interrupting?**
- **Monologues / decrees**
- **Expressions of frustration:**
  - **But what I'm trying to say is...**
  - **The point is...**
  - **You aren't listening to me!**
  - **That's not what I said!**
  - **That's not what I meant!**



# Good Signs

- **Engagement**
- **Lots of interrupting?**
- **Dialogue / consensus**
- **Expressions of appreciation:**
  - **I see, I hear, I understand**
  - **You see, you know, you understand**
  - **I never thought of it that way**
  - **Yeah, that's how it is**
  - **Requests for feedback and advice**





# **Rapport-building Skills from Ethnographic Interviewing**

- **Inviting someone else into a conversation**
- **Expressing your interest in listening**
- **Finding a good time and place**
- **Restating your interest in listening**
- **Expressing your common experience**
- **Expressing your ignorance**
- **Affirming that the other person has something worthwhile to say**
- **Encouraging them to tell you more**
- **Asking follow-up questions**
- **Restating what you think you heard**
- **Encouraging them to tell you more**



# **Inviting Questions to Ask**

- **I'd like to hear about...**
- **Tell me about...**
- **Help me understand...**
- **Can you give me an example?**
- **What do you think about \_\_\_\_\_?**
- **Can you tell me more about that?**

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**OK, let's try it.**