

Mark 4:1-29
Empathetic Listening

Sermon

Hobart, October 30th, 2011

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GOSPEL READING

Mark 4:1-29

4:1 Once again Jesus began teaching by the lakeshore. A very large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat in the boat while all the people remained on the shore. ² He taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables, such as this one:

³ “Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed. ⁴ As he scattered it across his field, some of the seed fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate it. ⁵ Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seed sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But the plant soon wilted under the hot sun, and since it didn’t have deep roots, it died. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain. ⁸ Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!” ⁹ Then he said, “Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

INTRODUCTION:

I. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS WE DO ALL THE TIME, VOLUNTARILY OR INVOLUNTARILY?

A. BREATH, PUMP BLOOD,

1. Hear/listen

B. WE ALSO HAVE THE OPTION TO MAKE SOUNDS, TO TALK

C. WHY ARE WE ALWAYS “HEARING”, BUT NOT ALWAYS TALKING?

1. Need to be aware of our surroundings and what is happening
2. Particularly to be aware of other people
3. To be aware of their presence, movements, and particularly their words, their communication to us

D. A MOTHER NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO HEAR HER CHILD’S CRY IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO RESPOND AND HELP

1. Parent’s, especially mother’s get to know how to interpret the various sounds and cries of each child

S.P.S:

A. TODAY WE ARE CONTINUING ON OUR SERIES ON “PARAKALEO”, ENCOURAGEMENT

B. AS WE DISCUSSED LAST TIME, IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO TRULY LOVE AND SERVE ONE ANOTHER WE NEED TO FIRST KNOW THEM, AND THEIR NEEDS

1. And that takes time and patience

2. It involves, empathy and compassion, sensitivity and objectivity

C. WE ARE FIRST GOING TO LOOK AT A COUPLE OF PASSAGES THAT TALK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING, OF TRULY HEARING GOD, AND ONE ANOTHER

1. Then we are going to try some simple listening exercises

D. PRAYER

BODY:

Mark 4:1-29

4 Once again Jesus began teaching by the lakeshore. A very large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat in the boat while all the people remained on the shore. ²He taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables, such as this one:

³“Listen!

E. LISTENING, TRULY PAYING ATTENTION, THINKING AND COGITATING ON WHAT IS BEING SAID

1. Is a matter Jesus often emphasized, and that is raised over and over throughout the Scriptures

a) This particular Greek term; **akouo { ak-oo'-o} occurs 428 times in the NT, around 1000 times in the TO.**

2) to hear

2b) to attend to, consider what is or has been said

2c) to understand, perceive the sense of what is said

3f) to comprehend, to understand¹

¹Strong, J. *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible : Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (G191). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

2. The imperative encouragement of Jesus, is for us to “listen”
3. To listen attentively, to receive, process, and understand and be changed by what we hear spoken by him

F. THIS PARABLE IS ABOUT RECEPTIVE LISTENING

³“Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed. ⁴ As he scattered it across his field, some of the seed fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate it. ⁵ Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seed sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But the plant soon wilted under the hot sun, and since it didn’t have deep roots, it died. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain. ⁸ Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!”
⁹ Then he said, “Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

G. WHAT DO YOU THINK JESUS WANTS US TO HEAR AND UNDERSTAND HERE?

1. Jesus goes on to discuss problems of not hearing, of failing to understand, with quotes from the prophets about the same problem

¹⁰ Later, when Jesus was alone with the twelve disciples and with the others who were gathered around, they asked him what the parables meant.
¹¹ He replied, “You are permitted to understand the secret* of the Kingdom of God. But I use parables for everything I say to outsiders, ¹² so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled:
‘When they see what I do, they will learn nothing.
When they hear what I say, they will not understand.
Otherwise, they will turn to me and be forgiven.’”

2. Perhaps Jesus is being sarcastic here.

* Greek *mystery*.

* Isa 6:9-10 (Greek version).

a) But in any case, it is sadly true, that it is human nature to not pay attention when we ought to

b) To stubbornly, and independently, and selfishly ignore what others have to say, and be consumed with our own thoughts and ideas

H. JESUS GOES ON TO EXPLAIN THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS

¹³ Then Jesus said to them, “If you can’t understand the meaning of this parable, how will you understand all the other parables? ¹⁴ The farmer plants seed by taking God’s word to others. ¹⁵ The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away. ¹⁶ The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷ But since they don’t have deep roots, they don’t last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God’s word. ¹⁸ The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God’s word, ¹⁹ but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced. ²⁰ And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God’s word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!”

I. WHAT IS THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING JESUS’ IS BRINGING OUT THROUGH THIS PARABLE?

- 1.
- 2.

J. JESUS KEEPS ON TOPIC WITH THE FOLLOWING PARABLE OF THE LAMP;

²¹ Then Jesus asked them, “Would anyone light a lamp and then put it under a basket or under a bed? Of course not! A lamp is placed on a stand, where its light will shine. ²² For everything that is hidden will eventually be brought into the open, and every secret will be brought to light. ²³ Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

1. God reveals himself and the good news to us, bit by bit. Eventually all will be brought to light
 - a) He is the God who reveals, not the God who hides things

²⁴ Then he added, “Pay close attention to what you hear. The closer you listen, the more understanding you will be given*—and you will receive even more. ²⁵ To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given.

K. WHAT DO WE LEARN HERE?

1. The more we listen, and allow truth to change our perceptions and understanding, the more we are able to absorb –the more light we receive

a) With the soil being improved and fertilized more and more, we are able to absorb and grow more

b) For example; learning to read

(1) Once we understand how to read a few words, we are able to read and understand more

c) Or learning about gardening, cooking, car mechanics, computers or playing chess

(1) Each piece of knowledge allows us to learn more

L. BUT JESUS SAYS THE OPPOSITE ALSO IS TRUE:

25b But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them.”

1. Too often we think we hear, we jump to conclusions, we assume and presume, but have only partly heard and understood

a) Or we have interpreted what we hear through our own emotions and biases or preconceptions

b) By rejecting that we don't like, or twisting it to fit our ideas, experiences and beliefs

M. JESUS ILLUSTRATES HOW WE GROW IN UNDERSTANDING BY TRULY LISTENING AND HEARING IN YET ANOTHER PARABLE

Parable of the Growing Seed

²⁶ Jesus also said, “The Kingdom of God is like a farmer who scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, while he's asleep or awake, the seed sprouts and grows, but

* Or *The measure you give will be the measure you get back.*

he does not understand how it happens. ²⁸ The earth produces the crops on its own. First a leaf blade pushes through, then the heads of wheat are formed, and finally the grain ripens. ²⁹ And as soon as the grain is ready, the farmer comes and harvests it with a sickle, for the harvest time has come.”²

A. RECEPTIVE, SPIRIT LED HEARTS AND MINDS ARE FERTILE SOIL FOR THE LIFE AND KINGDOM OF GOD TO FLOURISH

1. Growth becomes exponential

B. OUR LIFE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THRIVES WHEN WE ATTENTIVELY LISTEN TO HIM THROUGH HIS SON AND HIS SPIRIT

1. We learn more about who he is, and the life of the Father, Son and Spirit

a) The love and new life God has to share with all of us

C. WHAT I'D LIKE US TO THINK ABOUT IN THIS CONTEXT IS THE GREAT COMMANDMENT;

1. Which is?

Mark 12:30 ...you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’

³¹ The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’* No other commandment is greater than these.”

D. NOT ONLY DO WE NEED TO LISTEN, HEAR, AND UNDERSTAND GOD

1. But in love, we need to listen, hear and understand one another

a) For our sakes, and for theirs –for the sake of family, church, workplace and community

b) Without good, caring, attentive listening; relationships suffer

c) With good listening relationships are built and blessed

²Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Mk 4:1-29). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

* Lev 19:18.

2. Dr. John Kline, an expert on listening skills, wrote a *Listening Skills* manual for the US Airforce

a) He gives a long list of keys to good listening, but concludes with the most important one;

Follow the Golden Rule. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. The central focus of all effective communication is “other directedness.” The effective listener is *always* other directed, focused on the other person.

Be the kind of listener you want others to be when you are talking. Ask “How would I want others to listen to me?” That’s how to be an effective listener.³

3. The first point he made, was that to be effective listeners, we need to want to listen.

a) In other words, we need to love and care for the other person, and not let our own thoughts, distractions and priorities make us into stony or thorny listening soil

b) We need to be receptive, fertile soil

c) Humble, caring and compassionate

E. PAUL FRITZ DISCUSSES SOME LESSONS ABOUT LISTENING FROM MARK 4

There were four types of listeners in the parable of Mark 4:1-22:

¹⁵ The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away.

1. The impatient, shallow and easily distracted listeners –

a) How does this same problem apply when we are listening to others?

b)

¹⁶ The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷ But since they don’t have deep roots, they don’t last

³ John Kline,

long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word.

2. The open but superficial listeners –

- a) Perhaps these people are just interested in exciting facts, stimulating ideas. But they don't really care. They quickly get bored and move on to the next thing that interests them.
- b) They aren't prepared for self-sacrifice, work or commitment.
- c) They don't give truth, or the thoughts, needs and situations of others enough time for them to be able to really understand them

d) How does this same problem apply when we are listening to others?

¹⁸ The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word, ¹⁹ but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced.

3. These are open but distracted listeners –

- a) These people are open to hearing what is being said, but allow the worries, riches and pleasures of life to deter them from focusing on what is really important

b) How does this same problem apply when we are listening to others?

(1)

²⁰ And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

4. The humble, open, receptive and responsive listeners –

- a) These people listen, understand and respond appropriately
- b) These listeners are the most productive people as Jesus went on to show.
- c) Verse 20 gives us a great insight into the way we can improve our listening, not only to God, but to others

CONCLUSION:

A. WE PLAN TO CONTINUE ON WITH THIS TOPIC

1. More principles for encouraging, listening, being there for others

B. SO WHAT HAVE WE BEEN REMINDED OF TODAY?

1. God encourages us to listen to his Son
 - a) To pay close attention to his Words
 - b) So we can know him and the Father better
 - c) Know of their love more clearly and grow closer to them in faith, knowledge and relationship
2. This is all at the heart of the first great commandment
3. The second part, loving our neighbour also involves listening with love and desire to know others better
 - a) Desiring to share with them the same love, empathy, compassion and care that God continually shares with us
 - b) Part of this involves putting their needs first
 - (1) Especially in listening to them
 - (2) Being fertile soil, receptive, humble and caring
 - (3) Encouraging them and supporting them by hearing them, being there for them in a non-judgmental and selfless manner

C. THE MORE WE ALLOW JESUS AND THE SPIRIT TO LEAD US IN THIS WAY

1. The more we and others are blessed
 - a) The more the kingdom grows and spreads its influence and benefits

D. PRAYER

II. EXERCISES:

A. EXERCISES:

- ☞ Divide up into pairs
- ☞ Take turns talking and listening

1. Eye Contact and Body Language

- a. One person is to talk about their most embarrassing experience at school or work. Other person to avoid eye contact, look everywhere but at the talker, slouch, yawn, turn to the side etc.
 1. Swap roles and repeat:
 2. Review: Talkers to discuss how it felt
- b. Try exercise again, this time the listener is to give good eye-contact, pay attention and show interest in everything that is said.
 1. Swap roles and repeat:
 2. Review: Talkers to discuss how it felt this time.

B. REVIEW:

1. Comments

2. Topic Jumping

- a. One person is to talk about how they came into the church. The “listener” is to interrupt with own thoughts or questions, relevant or irrelevant, and change the topic.
 1. Swap roles and repeat:
 2. Review: Talkers to discuss how it felt
- b. Try exercise again, this time the listener is to listen attentively, asking questions or making brief personal comments that are directly related to and reinforcing what is being said.
 1. Swap roles and repeat:
 2. Review: Talkers to discuss how it felt

C. REVIEW:

1. Comments

3. SATURDAY EVE. 7:30PM *MINISTERING TO THE CHURCH 2:*

III. HELPING BY LISTENING

So often when we think of helping people, we think of doing things for them, of them giving advice or answers.

People don't feel that just listening is very helpful. But how many times have we spent time with someone who has had problems way beyond our ability to be able to solve, or even really understand or cope with ourselves, and after spending some time in which all we were able to do was be there with them and listen, they have responded then or later by saying, "thanks so much, you've really helped me a lot. I feel so much better now." And we react with great incredulity.

James 1:19 My dear brothers and sisters, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. ²⁰ Your anger can never make things right in God's sight.⁴

Proverbs 18:13 What a shame, what folly, to give advice before listening to the facts!⁵

Reaching people with the Gospel is largely based on love. God's love being communicated through our loving them.

In this session we are going to discuss and practice three key skills in what is called *active listening*. Skills that many of us have, but are worth looking at and practicing, as they play a huge role in building relationships. Relationships being the key to evangelism.

IV.

⁴Holy Bible, *New Living Translation*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.

⁵Holy Bible, *New Living Translation*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.

A.

3. REVIEW HANDOUT - BASIC ATTENDING SKILLS

4. REVIEW HANDOUT – I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY – HOW TO HELP AND SUPPORT SOMEONE WHO IS DYING.

People need to know how much you care before they will hear how much you know!

B.

C.

A.

1.

NOTES

VI. HOW TO HELP PEOPLE IMPROVE THEIR LISTENING SKILLS

A. [PAUL FRITZ 1371 PAUL FRITZ SERMONS](#)

"Let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to become angry." (James 1:19)

Illustration: Two psychiatrists meet at their 20th college reunion. One is vibrant, while the other looks withered and worried. "So what's your secret?" the older looking psychiatrist asks. "Listening to other people's problems every day, all day long, for years on end, has made an old man of me." "So," replies the younger looking one, "who listens?"

American Health, quoted in Reader's Digest.

Many people are usually not good listeners. They are too busy thinking of what they will say next in their battle for truth.

Do not get discouraged. Appreciate the fact that certain people are so caught up in their need for control that they have a lot to learn in areas of patience, understanding, and empathy.

Illustration: As a child, General George S. Patton learned how to listen to the best voices inside of his head. Patton faced a severe reading disability, but through special visualization exercises, he conquered his handicap. When he faced numerous enemies in real battles he visualized the great warriors who had gone before him, guiding him on to victory. During times of depression, Patton visualized joy flooding over him in future celebrations of victory. Feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy were met with pictures in his mind of a God who values him greatly. Days of boredom were filled with visualizations of the excitement of drawing up strategy for the next great battle. By visualizing the overcoming of any obstacles, Patton conquered his greatest enemies of fear, self-hatred and inferiority.

Learn to listen for God's affirming promises. He will supply you with the messages you need. Sometimes He will use people. At other times He will use your memory. Most of the time He will use the scriptures as He speaks through that still small voice of the Holy Spirit. Learn to be a listener. If you would have God hear you when you pray, you must hear Him when He speaks. Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (Mark 4:9)

The Lord understood that some people could listen to truth, but fail to apply it to their lives. Look at the principles of listening that comes from the parable of the sower and seed. Here are some suggestions for helping all of us to learn how to be better listeners:

There were four types of listeners in the parable of Mark 4:1-22:

A. The resistant, closed and shallow listeners - This type of soil represents the hardheads that are closed to any new insights. They prefer to remain stuck in their traditions. They are resistant to anything new that God wants them to know.

B. The open but superficial listeners - These people listen for facts, but fail to grasp the crucial principles that are being taught. Some people forget new ideas when they realize that implementing them will involve work and commitment. Primarily, these people do not give truth a sufficient opportunity to affect their mind, will, and emotions. A poor listener seldom hears great teaching.

C. The open but distracted listeners - These people are open to truth, but allow the worries, riches and

pleasures of life to deter them from focusing on making applications to their lives. Some peoples' minds are so cluttered with distractions that truth is not able to bring forth any spiritual fruit. We reform others unconsciously when we walk uprightly.

D. The responsive and obedient listeners - These people listen, understand and obediently apply the scriptures to their lives by faith. They continually remain open to new insights. They search for deeper levels of understanding because they recognize that all truth is God's truth. They feed on the scriptures as food for their nourishment, growth and vitality. They are not content to just receive truth, but actively look for ways that they can teach it, apply it and embody its message. These listeners are the most productive people. Many opportunities are missed because we are broadcasting when we should be listening.

Illustration: Writer Charles Swindoll once found himself with too many commitments in too few days. He got nervous and tense about it. "I was snapping at my wife and our children, choking down my food at mealtimes, and feeling irritated at those unexpected interruptions through the day," he recalled in his book *Stress Fractures*. "Before long, things around our home started reflecting the patter of my hurry-up style. It was becoming unbearable.

"I distinctly remember after supper one evening, the words of our younger daughter, Colleen. She wanted to tell me something important that had happened to her at school that day. She began hurriedly, 'Daddy, I wanna tell you somethin' and I'll tell you really fast.'

"Suddenly realizing her frustration, I answered, 'Honey, you can tell me -- and you don't have to tell me really fast. Say it slowly.'" "I'll never forget her answer: 'Then listen slowly.'"

In order to help more of your people ascend to a higher level of learning and listening, examine some further characteristics of active listeners:

CHARACTERISTICS OF ACTIVE LISTENERS

1. They are discriminating, discerning and determined to use what they hear. A wise listener is not ready to accept anything that sounds too good to be true. A discriminating listener is able to discern the degrees of truth and sort out half-truths in most conversations.
2. They are willing to be attentive to all facts, emotions, ideas, implications, and applications. This person is willing to put aside any prejudices toward a speaker or an organization. They know how to apply objective values to what is being said.
3. They are willing to reconsider some of their previous biases, presuppositions, values, beliefs and traditions when truth is told in context.
4. They are interested in perceiving ideas from another person's viewpoint. This person has learned to appreciate the value of diverse cultures, experiences and educational backgrounds. They are tolerant.
5. They are willing to put away negative feelings, grudges, hurts, anger, resentments and skepticism to gain greater understanding from anyone.
6. They are willing to give their full mental and emotional attention to the one speaking.
7. They are ready to make application to the thoughts, attitudes and values of the speaker.
8. They are able to suspend judgment, criticism, and harsh evaluation until the speaker presents the entire case.
9. They possess enough patience and concentration to let the speaker finish a complete thought.
10. They know how to listen for substance as well as the implications of what is being said.

11. They know how to use great questions to encourage dialogue with people.
12. They know how to show proper respect and kindness to those who are speaking without interrupting them.
13. They know how to listen for multiple meanings in what is being said.
14. They are not afraid of hearing something that is new and different.
15. They prayerfully consider what individuals say regardless of their status, gender, or age.

Conclusion: How good a listener are you?

- 1) Since you think about four 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?
- 2) Do you listen primarily for facts rather than ideas when someone is speaking?
- 3) Do you avoid listening to things you feel will be too difficult to understand?
- 4) Can you tell from a person's appearance and delivery that there won't be anything worthwhile said?
- 5) When someone is talking to you do you appear to be paying attention when you're not?
- 6) Do certain words and phrases prejudice you so you cannot listen objectively?
- 7) When listening are you distracted by outside sights and sounds?

Leadership, Vol.1, No. 4, p. 99.

VII. LISTENING EFFECTIVELY; DR. JOHN A. KLINE

A. WRITTEN FOR USAF

A. RELATIONSHIP LISTENING

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/kline-listen/b10ch4.htm>

The purpose of relationship listening is either to help an individual or to improve the relationship between people. Therapeutic listening is a special type of relationship listening. Therapeutic listening brings to mind situations where counselors, medical personnel, or other professionals allow a troubled person to talk through a problem. But it can also be used when you listen to friends or acquaintances and allow them to “get things off their chests.” Although relationship listening requires you to listen for information, the emphasis is on understanding the other person. Three behaviors are key to effective relationship listening: attending, supporting, and empathizing.

1. *Attending*. Much has been said about the importance of “paying attention,” or “attending” behavior. In relationship listening, attending behaviors indicate that the listener is focusing on the speaker. Nonverbal cues are crucial in relationship listening; that is, your nonverbal behavior indicates that you are attending to the speaker— or that you aren't!

Eye contact is one of the most important attending behaviors. Looking appropriately and comfortably at the speaker sends a message that is different from that sent by a frequent shift of gaze, staring, or looking around the room. Body positioning communicates

acceptance or lack of it. Leaning forward, toward the speaker, demonstrates interest; leaning away communicates lack of interest. Head nods, smiles, frowns, and vocalized cues such as “uh huh,” “I see,” or “yes”—all are positive attending behaviors. A pleasant tone of voice, gentle touching, and concern for the other person’s comfort are other attending behaviors.

2. *Supporting*. Many responses have a negative or nonsupportive effect; for example, interrupting the speaker, changing the subject, turning the conversation toward yourself, and demonstrating a lack of concern for the other person. Giving advice, attempting to manipulate the conversation, or indicating that you consider yourself superior are other behaviors that will have an adverse effect on the relationship.

Sometimes the best response is silence. The speaker may need a “sounding board,” not a “resounding board.” Wise relationship listeners know when to talk and when to just listen—and they generally listen more than they talk.

Three characteristics describe supportive listeners: (1) discretion—being careful about what they say and do; (2) belief—expressing confidence in the ability of the other person; and (3) patience—being willing to give others the time they need to express themselves adequately.

3. *Empathizing*. What is empathy? It is not sympathy, which is a feeling for or about another. Nor is it apathy, which is a lack of feeling. Empathy is feeling and thinking *with* another person. The caring, empathic listener is able to go into the world of another—to see as the other sees, hear as the other hears, and feel as the other feels.

Obviously, the person who has had more experience and lived longer stands a better chance of being an effective empathic listener. The person who has never been divorced, lost a child to death, been bankrupt, or lost a job may have a more difficult time relating to people with these problems than one who has experienced such things.

Risk is involved with being an empathic relationship listener. You cannot be an effective empathic listener without becoming involved, which sometimes means learning more than you really want to know. But commanders can’t command effectively, bosses can’t supervise skillfully, and individuals can’t relate interpersonally without empathy. Abraham Lincoln is reported to have said, “I feel sorry for the man who cannot feel the stripes upon the back of another.” Truly, those who cannot feel *with* another person are at a disadvantage in understanding that person.

Empathic behavior can be learned. First, you must learn as much as you can about the other person. Second, you must accept the other person—even if you can’t accept some aspects of that person’s behavior. Third, you must have the desire to be an empathic listener. And you must remember that empathy is crucial to effective relationship listening.

1. Chapter 5

B. HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE LISTENER

The first four chapters discussed the need for effective listening, fallacies about listening, the process of listening, and the types of listening. They provided the background you need to improve your listening skills. This chapter is a prescriptive one. It offers practical suggestions on how to be a better listener.

While there are many ways to construct a list of suggestions, we will consider them in terms of what works best in three major categories:

1. What you *think* about listening.
2. What you *feel* about listening.
3. What you *do* about listening.

You can learn to listen effectively; look now at the components of that learning: thinking, feeling, doing.

1. What You *Think* about Listening

Although thinking, feeling, and doing go hand in hand, the thinking (or cognitive) domain of learning is perhaps the best place to begin. After all, effective listening takes effort—it requires maximum thinking power. Here are six suggestions.

1. *Understand the complexities of listening.* Most of us take good listening for granted. Therefore, we don't work very hard at improving. But listening is a complex activity, and its complexity explains the emphasis given in previous chapters to understanding the fallacies, processes, and types of listening.

Knowing the fallacies about listening can keep you from being trapped by them. Knowing that the process involves more than just receiving messages will help you focus on not just receiving, but the other components as well. Recognizing the five major types of listening will help you to consciously direct your energies toward the type of listening required for the circumstance of the moment.

Listening requires an active response, not a passive one. Effective listening doesn't just happen; it takes thought—and thinking can be hard work. But there is no other way to become an effective listener. Think about the complexities of listening, and work to understand them.

2. *Prepare to Listen.* Preparation consists of three phases—long-term, mid-term, and short-term. We said earlier that becoming an effective listener is a lifetime endeavor; in other words, expanding your listening ability will be an ongoing task. But there are two things you can do to improve your listening skills for the long term: (a) practice listening to difficult material and (b) build your vocabulary.

Too many people simply do not challenge their listening ability. Since most of today's radio and television programs do not require concentrated or careful listening, your listening skills do not improve through continued exposure to them. And you have to

stretch if you want to grow. Force yourself to listen carefully to congressional debates, lectures, sermons, or other material that requires concentration.

Building your vocabulary will improve your conversational skills and your reading skills as well as your listening skills. And the more words you learn, the better listener you will become.

Mid-term preparation for listening requires that you do the necessary background study before the listening begins. Background papers, prebriefs, and an advance look at a hard copy (or an electronic display) of briefing slides or charts will assist you in being ready to listen.

Short-term preparation may be defined as an immediate readiness to listen. When the speaker's mouth opens, you should open your ears. That is not the time to be hunting for a pen, reading a letter from home, or thinking about some unrelated subject. Good listeners—really good listeners—are in the “spring-loaded position to listen.” It is important to *prepare* to listen.



3. *Adjust to the situation.* No listening situation is exactly the same as another. The time, the speaker, the message—all change. But many other variables also affect listening, though less obviously so: physiological variables such as rest, hunger, comfort, endurance; psychological variables such as emotional stability, rapport with the speaker, knowledge of the subject; and physical factors such as size and color of the room. Obviously, some of these things will have a positive effect on your listening while others will have a negative effect.

A thick foreign accent, poor grammar, a room with poor acoustics, and the subject of the previous speaker—all may present special barriers to effective listening. However, being aware of the barriers and thinking about how to overcome them can help you improve the situation.

Good listeners are never trapped into thinking that any communication transaction or listening situation is exactly like any other. The Grecian philosopher Heraclitus said it well: “You can’t step into the same stream twice.” Things change. By thinking about the unique factors of the situation, you can do your most effective job as a listener. Adjust to the situation!

4. *Focus on ideas or key points.* At times, you may understand the process, you may have prepared well, and you may be able to adjust to the situation—yet you fail as a listener. This failure results because you didn’t listen to the right things. For example, you may remember a funny story the speaker told to make a point; but you missed the point.

Others boast, “I listen only for the facts.” By concentrating exclusively on individual supporting facts, they may actually miss the main ideas. Facts A, B, and C may be

interesting in their own right, but the speaker's reason for offering them is usually to develop a generalization from them. Generalizations, not facts, are usually most important.

In studies conducted some years ago at the University of New Mexico, I discovered that students who did best on all but rote memory examinations were those who listened for key points and ideas. Interestingly, those who attempted to memorize minute details did only slightly better on low-level rote memory exams than the individuals who focused on ideas—and they did much worse when long-term retention was the criterion. While there are some exceptions, as when listening for directions to someone's house or memorizing a mathematical formula, it is usually best to focus on ideas or key points.

5. Capitalize on the speed differential. Thought can operate much faster than speech. An average person may speak two or three words a second—120 to 180 words a minute. In bursts of enthusiasm, we may even speak a little faster. Most public speakers speak somewhat slower, especially to large audiences. Yet most listeners can process up to 500 words per minute, depending on the nature and difficulty of the material.

I have a machine that compresses speech on tape, but without the distortions normally associated with fast forwarding a tape or simply playing a tape or record at a faster speed. Compression is accomplished through systematic removal of small segments—so small that distortion is not noticed by listeners. Experiments in which listening time is cut in half—an hour lecture is listened to in half the time—reveal little, if any, significant loss in listening and learning. Admittedly, listeners are ready for a break because there is no time for their minds to wander. **Effective listening requires hard thinking, especially if the material is challenging.**

The results of these experiments point to the possibility of capitalizing on the speed differential. Unfortunately, the differential between speed of thought and speed of speech promotes daydreaming or concentrating on something other than what is being said. This is not the case with good listeners, however; they use the time differential to good advantage. They **summarize, anticipate, and formulate questions based on the speaker's message.** This type of time usage may explain why top listeners at the Air War College recently reported that they learned more from lectures than from any other method of instruction. They have learned to capitalize on the speed differential.

6. Organize material for learning. Obviously, speakers can enhance listening through careful organization and presentation of ideas. And if questions are appropriate, you can seek clarification of any points you fail to understand. Often, however, questioning is not permitted or, perhaps due to time constraints or the size of the audience, is inappropriate. What can you do?

Remembering that the speed differential exists, you can arrange the material in your mind or in your notes as it's being presented. This will help you understand and remember it later. You can prepare yourself to retain the information to be presented by asking these questions: What point is the speaker trying to make? What main ideas should I remember? How does this information relate to what I already know?

Reorganizing the material you need to learn, and seeking relationships between the new material and what you already know, requires concentrated thinking. It is easier to simply

“tune out.” There was a time in my early college years when I could not, “for the life of me,” see the relevance of some required classes to my course of study. A professor for whom I had great respect explained it to me this way: “John, someday you will come to understand that all information is part of a large mosaic or universe of knowledge. When that happens, you will value all learning. Always look for how the information relates to what you already know and what you need to know, and you will always find something.” You know what? He was right!

2. What You *Feel* about Listening

We began by discussing what you think about listening because effective listening requires rigorous cognitive processing, or thought. But possession of the sharpest mind will not make you a good listener if your feelings are wrong. In other words, what you feel about listening is important. Here are six suggestions for improving your “feel” for listening.

1. *Want to listen.* This suggestion is basic to all others, for it simply says that you must have an intent to listen. We can all recall having been forced to listen to a speech or a briefing that we didn’t really want to listen to. And listening under duress seldom results in understanding or enjoyment, although there are exceptions. Perhaps you have attended a meeting or a social event out of a sense of duty, yet found it to have been profitable. The reason? Probably, since you were there, you decided to make the best of the situation; that is, you made up your mind to listen.

Sometimes you don’t want to listen. At other times, your actions may indicate that you don’t want to listen when you really do. And at still other times, you may be unaware that you don’t want to listen. All three of these situations are affective or attitudinal; that is, they involve your feelings about listening.

Individuals often stop by my office and ask if they can talk for a few minutes. Perhaps they are seeking advice, telling about a project, or seeking clarification on a directive. Whatever the case, if I am not meeting with someone else or working against a deadline, I invite them in. But I must honestly admit that my mind sometimes wanders and I find myself looking at phone messages, fiddling with a paper clip, or looking at my guest with a blank stare. The visitor usually becomes uneasy, hurries the discussion, and offers to come back another time. I protest that I am really listening, but my actions betray me. It is difficult—indeed, nearly impossible—to really listen if you don’t have a mind to. You must *want* to listen.

2. *Delay judgment.* There are times when you must be a critical or judgmental listener. You must weigh the merits of what the speaker is saying. At times, you must make crucial decisions based on what you hear. There are also times when you must judge the speaker. Job interviews, campaign promises, speech contests—all are examples of where judgment of the speaker is important. The problem is, though, that you may be judgmental when you shouldn’t be. You may judge the speaker instead of the content, or you may form judgments before the speaker has finished.

A boy who was one month shy of being 16 decided to confess to his father that he had driven the family car on the previous night. His younger sister’s promised ride to

gymnastics class hadn't arrived, and it was the night of her final rehearsal before a performance. So he made the decision to take her even though he did not yet have a driver's license. He was also quite sure that he hadn't been seen and would never be found out. Still, his conscience was bothering him and his family had stressed honesty and openness. He decided to tell his father.

Upon hearing that the boy had taken the car, his father became furious. He scarcely heard the reason, and he failed to consider that the boy had taken it upon himself to confess. He told the boy that the act would delay his getting a driver's license by two months.

Then the father rethought the situation and said, "Son, I acted hastily. My emotions got the best of me. You were wrong to drive the car because you broke the law. But, frankly, I am proud of you for three reasons: you got your sister to gymnastics rehearsal, you were honest about it, and you are my son."

Supervisors often wonder why people in their organization won't level with them. They need only to consider the messenger in ancient Rome who paid with his life for bringing bad news. An ancient Turkish proverb says, "messenger with bad news should keep one foot in the stirrup." Delaying judgment and judging the content rather than the speaker will lead to better listening and more honest communication.

3. **Admit your biases.** Let's face it: Everyone is human! We all have likes and dislikes; some things turn us on, others turn us off. These characteristics are natural and to be expected. The problem comes when we let our biases—our likes and dislikes—get in the way of understanding the speaker's message.

For example, suppose you have had three bad experiences with people from Chicago and you learn that the speaker you have come to hear is from Chicago. You may have a tendency to immediately distrust him, or to discredit whatever he has to say. Only by admitting your prejudice against people from Chicago will you be able to think beyond your past experience and listen effectively to what this speaker has to say.

Before you reject the above example as irrelevant, consider a time in your past when you got sick after eating a certain food. You knew the sickness was caused by a virus and not the food, but it was quite a while before that food again tasted good to you. In a similar way, bias from past experience can influence what you hear and the meaning you derive from it. If you want to be an effective listener, you must know and admit your biases.

4. *Don't tune out "dry" subjects.* Whenever you are tempted to "tune out" something because you think it will be boring or useless, remember that you cannot evaluate the importance of the message until you have heard it. By then, it is probably too late to ask the speaker to repeat everything that was said; the opportunity to listen effectively will have passed. As was stated earlier, you must *intend* to listen.

Here are several things you can do to stay focused, even if the subject seems dry.

a. **Put yourself in the speaker's place. Try to see the speaker's point of view, and try to understand the speaker's attitude toward the subject.**

- b. Review frequently what the speaker has said. Try to summarize the message as the speaker would summarize it.
- c. Constantly ask yourself positive questions about what the speaker is saying: How can I use this information? How can I share this information with others? What else could be said about this subject?
- d. Ask yourself, “What does the speaker know that I don’t?”
- e. Find at least one major application or conclusion from every message you hear. In other words, ask “what’s in this message for me?” Then find the answer.
- f. Listen as though you are going to be required to present the same message to a different audience later.

Effective listeners have discovered the value of listening to messages they might have initially considered to be “dry.” Sometimes the messages aren’t so dry after all. And even when they are, there still may be something of value in them.

5. *Accept responsibility for understanding.* Don’t assume this attitude: “Here I am! Teach me—if you can.” Such listeners believe knowledge can be poured into them as water is poured into a jug. And they believe the responsibility rests with the one doing the pouring; that is, they believe it is the speaker’s fault if effective listening does not occur.

Admittedly, the basic assumption in *Speaking Effectively: A Guide for Air Force Speakers* is that the speaker bears a large responsibility for how well the audience listens. And the speaker’s clear organization, engaging support materials, and appropriate delivery do in fact aid listening. But good listeners *are* good because they accept the responsibility for listening and understanding.

6. *Encourage others to talk.* This point applies to those situations in which you find yourself “one-on-one,” in a small group discussion, or any other setting that requires exchanges of vocal communication. But you can’t listen if no one is talking. The first two guidelines of this section (communicating that you want to listen and being willing to delay judgment) are sources of encouragement to speakers. The discussion below covers several other things you can do.

- a. Stop talking. You can’t listen if you’re talking.
- b. Give positive feedback. Look and act interested. Positive head nods, alertness, and smiles—all offer encouragement to the speaker.
- c. Ask questions. Questions that show interest and attention encourage both speaker and listener. Show your interest.
- d. Empathize with the speaker. Put yourself in the speaker’s place; this will help you understand the message.
- e. Keep confidences. If the information is sensitive, don’t share it with others.

f. Share information. We tend to tell things to those who tell us things. So if you want the speaker to share information with you, share information with the speaker.

C. WHAT YOU DO ABOUT LISTENING

What we think about listening and what we feel about listening are both fundamental to skillful listening. But the skills themselves are *crucial*. Skills form the psychomotor—the “doing”—element of listening. Here are six crucial skills.

1. *Establish eye contact with the speaker.* Studies show that listening has a positive relationship with eye contact. In other words, the better eye contact you have with the speaker, the better you will listen. And while eye contact is especially important in relationship listening, it is also important for the other kinds of listening: informative, appreciative, critical, discriminative.

There are several things you can do to establish positive eye contact with the speaker:

- a. In one-on-one or small group settings, sit or stand where you can look directly at the person doing the speaking.
- b. In large groups, sit to the front and center of the audience. You can more easily establish eye contact with the speaker from this vantage point.
- c. Don't get so involved in taking notes that you fail to look often at the speaker. The speaker's gestures, movements, and facial expression are often an important part of the message.
- d. Resist the temptation to let something about the room, or objects within and around the room, distract you. Focus on the speaker and the message.
- e. Don't look at others who enter or leave while the speaker is speaking. This practice not only interrupts your train of thought—it adds to the distraction of the speaker.
- f. Speakers sometimes exhibit a visual aid too soon, or neglect to remove it when they have finished using it. Focus on the visual aid only when it is an asset to the point being discussed.

A final point deserves discussion: Never sleep when someone is talking to you! This point may seem self-evident. But let's face it—in the “busyness” of our lives, we tend to become passive whenever we listen. Passivity promotes reduced attention, which in turn allows drowsiness to occur. In most cases, it is better to stand up, or even to leave the room, rather than fall asleep.

2. *Take notes effectively.* Some people recommend that you not take notes so you can focus your attention wholly on what the speaker is saying. This practice works well for listeners who are blessed with a great memory; most of us aren't. Taking notes will not only help you remember, it will help you organize what the speaker is saying. And it may even aid your understanding and retention—after all, effective note taking will require you to think.

There are many different ways to take notes; for example, linear outlining, mindmapping, and key word methodology. Ask different people what method they use, then find what works best for you. Whatever method you select or devise, several things are worth considering.

- a. Don't attempt to write everything down. As mentioned earlier, effective listeners focus on the key ideas or main points.
- b. Write clearly enough that you can understand your writing later. If not, make certain that you allow time to decipher your notes before they grow "cold." It's disheartening to review your notes two weeks later only to find that they make no sense.
- c. Don't rely on listening later to a tape of the speech. Think! Will you have the time? Looking at your notes for five minutes is generally sufficient, and is much more time-efficient than listening to the entire speech again.
- d. Circle or highlight the most important points.

3. **Be a physically involved listener.** Just what does this statement mean? As you have already seen, listening requires more than just hearing. You have also seen that making eye contact and taking notes will help to keep you from becoming passive. But there is more: Active listening takes energy and involvement.

Here are some physical behaviors that will ensure your involvement and help your listening.

- a. **Use good posture.** Sit up straight, yet comfortably. Good posture aids breathing and alertness. It also communicates positive interest to the speaker.
- b. **Follow the speaker.** If the speaker moves, turn your head or rotate in your chair to maintain eye contact and attention. This movement also aids in keeping you alert.
- c. **Don't be a deadpan.** Facial expressions, head nods, and tilts of the head show your involvement and provide positive feedback to the speaker.
- d. Use your hands not only to take notes, but to show approval by applause when appropriate.
- e. Participate when audience involvement is encouraged. Ask questions. Respond when a show of hands is called for. Be an active listener.

f. **Smile.**



4. **Avoid negative mannerisms.** Everyone has mannerisms. Watch anyone for a period of time and you will be convinced of this fact. If your mannerisms do not cause a negative reaction, don't worry about them. If a mannerism is positive or encouraging and brings a positive response, make a

mental note to do it more often. Unfortunately, some mannerisms are negative or distracting. These should be avoided.

Here are some examples of listener mannerisms that either hinder listening or have a negative impact—on the speaker or on other listeners. **Avoid these mannerisms.**

a. **Fidgeting**, tapping a pencil, or playing with a rubber band or some other object. The effect on you may be neutral, but such things distract other listeners and are an annoyance to the speaker.

b. Continually **looking at the clock or your watch**.

c. Reading a paper, balancing a checkbook, rearranging items in your wallet, or engaging in other behavior which takes focus away from the speaker.

d. **Displays of arrogance, superiority, or lack of interest** in the speaker and message.

In short, any mannerism or behavior that detracts from the speaker or the message should be avoided. Such things hinder the speaker, divert the attention of other listeners, and prevent you from being the best listener you can be.

5. **Exercise your listening muscles**. Actually, there are no muscles technically involved with listening—but this thought reminds us that listening takes practice. Just as an athlete must work out regularly and a musician must practice daily, so you must work consistently to be an effective listener.

But consistent practice in itself is not enough. The difficulty of the message is also important. Exposure to challenging material and difficult listening situations will stretch your ability and build your listening muscles. For example, suppose you knew that you would be required to carry a 50-pound weight one hundred yards in less than a minute. You wouldn't practice by carrying a 30-pound weight. You would practice by carrying at least a 50-pound weight, and you probably would condition yourself to carry it more than 100 yards in less than a minute. With this kind of practice, you would be more than equal to the task. And so it is with listening: Practice to *at least* the level you will be required to perform—perhaps a bit above.

Finally, “s-t-r-e-t-c-h” your vocabulary. We've said this before, but nothing will pay greater listening dividends. Learn the meanings of new words and acronyms. Listen to and read material that contains challenging words. Keep a dictionary nearby. Look up new words as you read them, or jot them down as you listen so you can look up the meanings later.

6. **Follow the Golden Rule. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. The central focus of all effective communication is “other directedness.”** There are exceptions to most other listening rules. For example, there are times when a listener shouldn't prepare; preparation may prevent openness to new ideas. There are times when the objective is not to focus on key points, but to listen for subordinate ideas or supporting material. There are times when we should not delay judgment—we must act! But while

these and other rules have exceptions, not so for the Golden Rule. The effective listener is *always* other directed, focused on the other person.

Be the kind of listener you want others to be when you are talking. Ask “How would I want others to listen to me?” That’s how to be an effective listener.

VIII.

[Mark A. Copeland](#)

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http://executableoutlines.com/ro2/ro12_15.htm

"THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"

The Empathetic Christian (12:15)

INTRODUCTION

1. In the twelfth chapter of Romans, we find answers to questions such as...
 - a. What is indicative of a true transformation?
 - b. What constitutes God's good, acceptable, and perfect will for the Christian?
2. We have seen in previous lessons that it includes...
 - a. Fulfilling our function in the body of Christ - [Ro 12:3-8](#)
 - b. Love without hypocrisy, while abhorring what is evil - [Ro 12:9](#)
 - c. Loving brethren with family affection, esteeming one another highly - [Ro 12:10](#)
 - d. Serving the Lord diligently, with fervency of spirit - [Ro 12:11](#)
 - e. Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, steadfast in prayer - [Ro 12:12](#)
 - f. Having fellowship in the needs of the saints, pursuing hospitality toward strangers - [Ro 12:13](#)
 - g. To bless those who persecute us - [Ro 12:14](#)
3. Now we note the twofold exhortation...
 - a. "Rejoice with those who rejoice" - [Ro 12:15a](#)
 - b. "Weep with those who weep" - [Ro 12:15b](#)

[In this text we are called to display the virtue of "empathy" towards one another. What this entails will be the focus of our study...]

I. DEFINING EMPATHY

A. COMPARED TO SYMPATHY...

1. **Sympathy** - An inclination to support or be loyal to or to agree with an opinion
2. **Empathy** - Understanding and entering into another's feelings
-- **One may be sympathetic while not empathetic; the latter requires a deeper emotional involvement than the former**

B. ITS PLACE IN THE CHURCH...

1. The Lord intended such connection between the members of His

Body ("if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it")
- [1Co 12:26](#)

2. "This command grows out of the doctrine stated in [Ro 12:4,5](#) that the church is one; that it has one interest; and therefore that there should be common sympathy in its joys and sorrows."
- Barnes
- **If we are truly one, members of the same body, then we will be empathetic towards one another**

[Our text commands two ways to demonstrate empathy; we have several examples of individuals...]

II. DEMONSTRATING EMPATHY

A. REJOICING WITH THOSE WHO REJOICE...

1. Neighbors and friends of Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist
- [Lk 1:58](#)
 2. Barnabas at Antioch, when he saw the grace of the Lord at work
- [Ac 11:23](#)
- **Two good examples of sharing in others' happiness and success without envy or jealousy**

B. WEEPING WITH THOSE WHO WEEP...

1. David with his sick friends - [Ps 35:13,14](#)
 2. Jesus with the family and friends of Lazarus grieving over his death - [Jn 11:33-35](#)
 3. Paul with his weak and stumbling brethren - [2Co 11:29](#)
 4. Christians with their brethren in prison - [He 13:3](#)
- **People of God truly understanding and entering into the feelings of their friends and brethren**

[The quality of empathy certainly prepares one to be of greater service to those around them. How can we rise above simple sympathy for others to truly become "The Empathetic Christian"...?]

III. DEVELOPING EMPATHY

A. TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF OUR MINDS...

1. We must submit to the transformation that comes by renewing our minds - cf. [Ro 12:1-2](#)
 2. Which will involve the development of such graces as:
 - a. Being kindly affectionate to one another in brotherly love
- [Ro 12:10a](#)
 - b. Giving preference to one another in honor - [Ro 12:10b](#)
- **Note how being affectionate aids in being able to weep, and learning to give preference will enable us to rejoice**

B. DEVELOPING THE MIND OF CHRIST...

1. Note the virtues that characterize the mind of Christ - cf. [Ph 2:3-5](#)
 - a. Doing nothing through selfish ambition or conceit
 - b. In lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than oneself
 - c. Looking out for the interest of others
2. Note the goal of having the mind of Christ - [Php 2:2](#)
 - a. To be like-minded
 - b. To have the same love
 - c. To be of one accord, of one mind

3. Note what having the mind of Christ is necessary for to experience - [Php 2:1-2a](#)
 - a. Consolation in Christ
 - b. Comfort of love
 - c. Fellowship of the Spirit
 - d. Affection and mercy
 - e. Fullness of joy
- **As one develops the mind of Christ, there will be no envy or jealousy to prevent true empathy; with the mind of Christ, we will be able to truly rejoice and weep!**

CONCLUSION

1. It is God's good, acceptable and perfect will that Christians be a people...
 - a. Who are glad when others rejoice
 - b. Who are moved when others weep
- **For only then can we be useful in sharing the joy and comfort of Christ with others**
2. Are we truly an "empathetic" people? The development and display of true empathy will greatly...
 - a. Increase our usefulness to the Master
 - b. Enhance the fellowship we have in the Lord
- **Simple sympathy is not enough; we must be able to understand and enter into one another's feelings!**

Develop the mind of Christ, be transformed by the renewing of your mind, and you cannot help but become "**The Empathetic Christian**"...!

http://executableoutlines.com/ro2/ro12_15.htm

IX.

A.

:19 [Psalm 145:19]

desire of them that fear him; He also will **hear** their cry and will save them.

Psalm 102:20]

heaven did Jehovah behold the earth; 20To **hear** the sighing of the prisoner; To loose those that

Psalm 143:8]

that go down into the pit. 8Cause me to **hear** thy lovingkindness in the morning; For in thee

Proverbs 22:17]

only to want. 17Incline thine ear, and **hear** the words of the wise, And apply thy heart unto

Ecclesiastes 7:5]

in the house of mirth. 5It is better to **hear** the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to **hear**

[Isaiah 6:9]

And he said, Go, and tell this people, **Hear** ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed

Isaiah 6:10 [Isaiah 6:10]

eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and **hear** with their ears, and understand with their heart

saiah 37:4 [Isaiah 37:4]

forth. 4It may be Jehovah thy God will **hear** the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria

Isaiah 37:7 [Isaiah 37:7]

will put a spirit in him, and he shall hear tidings, and shall return unto his own land;

Isaiah 37:17 (2) [Isaiah 37:17]

earth. 17Incline thine ear, O Jehovah, and hear; open thine eyes, O Jehovah, and see; and hear

Ezekiel 8:18 [Ezekiel 8:18]

ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.

Ezekiel 12:2 (2) [Ezekiel 12:2]

to see, and see not, that have ears to hear, and hear not; for they are a rebellious house

[Zechariah 7:11]

their fingers in their ears to keep from hearing. 12 They made their hearts as hard as stone

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Matthew 13:9 [Matthew 13:9]

some thirty. 9He that hath ears, let him hear. 10And the disciples came, and said unto him

Matthew 13:13 [Matthew 13:13]

because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14And unto

Matthew 13:14 [Matthew 13:14]

Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; And seeing

Matthew 13:15 [Matthew 13:15]

they should perceive with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart

Matthew 13:16 [Matthew 13:16]

, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. 17For verily I say unto you, that many prophets

Matthew 13:17 (2) [Matthew 13:17]

which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not.

[Revelation 3:22]

throne. 22He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches

1 Kings 3:7-14 NLT

⁷“Now, O LORD my God, you have made me king instead of my father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn’t know his way around. ⁸And here I am in the midst of your own chosen people, a nation so great and numerous they cannot be counted! ⁹Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?”

¹⁰The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom. ¹¹So God replied, “Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies— ¹²I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has had or ever will have! ¹³And I will also give you what you did not ask for—riches and fame! No other king in all the world will be compared to you for the rest of your life! ¹⁴And if you follow me and obey my decrees and my commands as your father, David, did, I will give you a long life.”

3:6-9. Solomon recognized that God’s **kindness** to **David** was due to his father’s faithfulness to God which manifested itself in **righteous** actions and **upright** attitudes of

⁶Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (1 Ki 3:7-14). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

heart. The king also acknowledged his own immaturity and need for God’s wisdom. Solomon was about 20 years old when he took the throne.

In calling himself a **child**, he was admitting his inexperience (cf. 1 Chron. 22:5; 29:1). Solomon was concerned that he would be able to function effectively as the vice-regent of Yahweh. His responsibility as the leader and judge of God’s **people** weighed heavily on him. So he requested a **discerning heart** (lit., ”a hearing heart“) tuned to the voice of **God** so he could lead Israel as God would want the nation to be led. He acknowledged his dependence on God by referring to himself as God’s **servant** (1 Kings 3:7-8).

3:10-14. **Solomon** placed the good of God’s people above his personal peace or prosperity and above any desire to become a powerful and popular king. His values were in the right place from God’s perspective. Therefore **God** promised to give him what he requested. He would possess a **wise . . . heart** (v. 12) and be able to discern and render fair judgments (v. 11).⁷

cf. *confer*, compare

lit. literal, literally

v. verse

⁷Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (494). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.