

Listening to God

The bible teaches that Christ followers should be attentive—listening to God’s word (Neh. 8:1–3) and learning from good bible teachers.

The apostle Paul wrote: How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? Ro 10:14.

In The Book of Acts, Dr. Luke records that the apostle Peter’s message brought conviction to men (Ac 2:37–38). Men must be convicted of sin to receive the gift of grace which leads to repentance. Luke warned that men must discriminate. He said: “Take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.” Lk 8:18.

Men are responsible for the light given them. Responsibility for what one has heard is increased by: sight (Jn 9:39–41), privilege (Jn 15:22, 24), opportunity (Mt 11:20–24), continuance in sin (Mt 23:31–35) and rejection of the gospel (Mt 10:11–15). God is not mocked. Men reap what they sow (Ga 6:7).

No one teacher gets everything right. Believers rely on one another to learn and grow together. They should be likeminded (1 Pe 3:8). The Holy Spirit teaches men: precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little (Is 28:10). Christians should be in a church where a gospel message is preached. They fellowship with others because as iron sharpens iron, one person sharpens another in the faith (Pr 27:17).

The way one responds to what he has heard is all-important (2 Sa 7:17–29). God is looking for penitent men to worship him (2 Sa 12:12, 13). David, though not perfect, was a man after God’s own heart (1 Sa 13:14). God has been called the hound of heaven. He wants men to seek after him, as well.

A wrong response to hearing the gospel is: indifference, denial or rebellion. God only speak to an individual for so long before their time is up—their day of visitation passes (Ge 6:3) and they can no longer be saved (Lk 19:44). The bible says: Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2 Co 6:2–3).

One can hear the truth of scripture and respond with: repentance (2 Sam. 12:12, 13), rebellion (Ezek. 33:30–33), retreat (Jn 6:60–66), resistance (Ac 7:51–54), rejoicing (Ac 13:48), rejection (Ac 28:23–29) or feeling the need to do a little more research (Ac 17:11).

Each person should talk to God—tell him everything—and hear what he has to say. He does not speak to men audibly. He speaks to man’s spirit on a deeper level than audible words.

One time the prophet Elijah complained about his situation to God. He went to a cave and spent the night there. The Lord told him to stand outside the cave. The Lord passes by but he was not in: the windstorm, earthquake, or fire. The Lord came to Elijah in a gentle whisper (1 Ki 19:9–14).

One need not be the great prophet Elijah to hear a word from God. He speaks sometimes in a still small voice.

The Jews claimed to be children of Abraham; but, Jesus explained because his word found no place in them, they were actually children of the devil (Jn 8:37–41).

They had asked Jesus to speak plainly to them. Why was it that they could not hear his message? Jesus answered: they didn't believe because they were not his sheep: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me," he said (Jn 10:27).

Listening to Others

Children should listen to and obey their parents in the Lord (Eph. 6:1–3).

Spouses should listen to and take advice from one another (1 Cor. 14:35). Headship is not biblical but mutual submission between husbands and wives is (Eph 5:22-27).

Christians should obey laws and agents of the state (Matt. 8:9; Rom. 13:1–6). Where there is a conflict between God and man—God rather than man is to be obeyed (Ac 5:29).

Those naming the name of Christ should listen to elders in the church (Acts 26:10, 12). Unrepentant Christians should be disciplined (Mt 18:16-17, 1 Co 5:5).

God's way is the best way to run a society (1 Pet. 2:13–17). Men will witness this reality during Christ's rule and reign on the earth during the millennial period (Rev. 20:1–10).

The wise hear godly advice (Pr 2:1-22, 10:8, 12:15). There is wisdom in a multitude of counselors (Pr 15:22).

Believers are not to be hearers only but doers of the word (Jas 1:22).

It is the Lord who enables men to see and hear spiritual things (Pr 20:12).