

## HEARING THE WORD

### I. Why Hear?

- Provides us with insight from Bible Study done by others.
- Stimulates our own appetites for the Scripture.
- Easiest way to receive intake of God's Word.
- The Bible commands it. Romans 10: 17, Luke 6:45-49, Luke 11:28, 1 Thessalonians 2: 13, Jeremiah 22:29, Proverbs 28: 9, Ezekiel 3: 10, Matthew 7:24-27.

### II. Why Is This Important?

- We forget 90-95% of what we hear after 72 hours.
- "We have heard enough sermons in our life to be the greatest Christians that have ever lived."  
Jerry Fine
- Mark 4:2-20 - fruit is not produced in the lives of most Christians after hearing a message; this is evidence that we are not correctly hearing the Word of God.
- Many times if we feel that if we are listening to a message and taking notes then we are effectively hearing God's Word. This is not necessarily true. We may just be going through the motions.
- If a person continually practices the wrong way *I* the results will never change. Results only begin to change when you begin to practice correct habits. We will only begin to grow and develop as God wants us too as we begin to listen to God's Word according to how the Bible tells us. 2 Peter 1:13-15

### III. Ways to Hear God's Word

- Church, Sunday *School*, Tapes, Conferences, BSU, Radio

### IV. Ways to Improve Your Hearing

- We have a responsibility before the message:
  - James 1:21-25
- To get rid of all '*moral filth*'  
"All of us prepare ourselves outwardly before a service but most of us have failed to prepare ourselves inwardly." Howard Hendricks
- The Greek word for filthiness (*rhuparia*) is literally translated as the English word "dirt".
- To get rid of the '*evil that is so prevalent*'
- The Greek word for prevalent (*perisseuo*) is translated as "to abound, to be over and above, to remain over" in the English language. Also see Matthew 14:20; Luke 9:17; John 6:12,13  
"When sin is not confessed it tends to build up and constitutes a barrier across the door of the human heart. The sin begins to build and accumulate like junk or debris in the human heart and it prevents God's truth from finding a place in our hearts." Howard Hendricks
- Psalm 24:3-6 "Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?"  
"You can't stick dirty hands and feet beneath the table of the Lord and expect to enjoy the meal"  
Howard Hendricks
- We must remove the sin in our life before you come to listen to the Word of God. -"Preaching is one of God's chief means of sowing seed and helping fruit grow; it is a way of watering and fertilizing the crop. But you must break up the hard clods that have formed in your soul over the week, turn under the weeds, and prepare the good soil to receive the good seed." Jay Adams

### Practical Application:

- Make sure you are rested before the next message you hear (go to sleep early the night before, take a nap beforehand.
- Confess any known sin that you might have in your life Psalm 34, 51, 147; Isaiah 57, 66

- Pray and ask God to open your heart and speak to you (remember the message is for you not for someone else)
- Pray for a humble and teachable heart (even if you've heard the topic or passage preached many times)
- Pray against a wandering mind and distractions
- Pray against a critical spirit (music, speaker, etc.).
- Praise and thank God for the PRIVILEGE of being able to hear His Word taught. Pray for the message bearer. (Eph. 6: 19)
- Pray 1 Thessalonians 2: 13. Recognize that what you are about to hear is not from man but from God! (it doesn't matter who the speaker is)
- Be early! (Allows you to find a close seat/allows you not to rush into the presence of God/ shows that you are eager to hear from God and expecting great things from Him) (10) Pray for a readiness and eagerness to hear God's Word (pray against any bad attitudes) ---page 31 "Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life" by Don
- Many times when we go to church we pick and choose what we want to hear.
- Many times when we go to church we listen to the sermon as if it were directed to everyone else except us.
- The Greek word for "accept" (*dechoma/*) is translated in English as "to receive by deliberate and ready reception of what is offered" Also see Luke 2:28
- Literally what James is saying is that when you listen to the Word of God you need to put out a WELCOME mat for it because it was designed for you.
- Learn to discipline yourself to hear the Word of God as if there was no one else present and the speaker is speaking directly to you.
- "The basic outlook of the listener must be to identify himself as the target of the message. The listener is not there to admire or criticize a piece of oratorical art, but to be spoken to personally by God's representative." John MacArthur

### **Practical Application:**

1. Sit near the front to cut off distractions.
2. Take notes on what you hear.
3. Helps you to concentrate.
4. Allows you to review and better obey what you've heard
5. Allows you to file for the future.
6. Allows you to reproduce what you've heard in the life of another. Illustration: (heard from Jerry Fine)
7. A motivational speaker for corporations shared how sometimes we do not come prepared to take advantage of the opportunities we have. He told about visiting a church to hear a sermon. He said that he sat down and got prepared to hear the message with a pen and paper in hand, ready to take notes on the message. He suddenly became aware that no one around him had a pen and paper. This thought crossed his mind, "They must not be expecting much."
8. Don't fall into the trap of picking and choosing what you want to hear.
9. Learn to discipline yourself to hear the Word of God as if there was no one else present and the speaker is speaking directly to you. (it is easy to think "so and so needs to hear that")
10. Think aggressively (why did he say that? how does the truth compare to other passages in Scripture?, are there any questions to ask of the speaker?, etc.)
11. Even if you've heard the topic many times seek to grow in your understanding and application of the topic. (realize that God designed this message just for you) (Ex. Of Max)
12. Be attentive 1 (sit up straight, give the speaker eye contact, don't talk, be respectful)