What Good Does It Do to Think About It?

Introduction:

1. Are You Listening?

It was one of those days when I wanted my own apartment...unlisted.

My son was telling me in complete detail about a movie he had just seen, punctuated by three thousand “You know’s?” My teeth were falling asleep.

There were three phone calls – strike that – three monologues that could have been answered by a recording. I fought the urge to say, “It’s been nice listening to you.”

In the cab from home to the airport, I got another assault on my ear, this time by a cab driver who was rambling on about his son who he supported in college, and was in his last year, who put a P. S. on his letter saying, “I got married. Her name is Diane.” He asked me, “What do you think of that?”, and proceeded to answer the question himself.

There were thirty whole beautiful minutes before my plane took off...time for me to be alone with my own thoughts, to open a book and let my mind wander. A voice next to me belonging to an elderly woman said, “I bet it’s cold in Chicago.”

Stone-faced, I answered, “It’s likely.”

“I haven’t been to Chicago in nearly three years,” she persisted. “My son lives there.”

“That’s nice,” I said, my eyes intent on the printed page of the book.

“My husband’s body is on this plane. We’ve been married for fifty-three years. I don’t drive, you know, and when he died a nun drove me from the hospital. We aren’t even Catholic. The funeral director let me come to the airport with him.”

I don’t think I have ever detested myself more than I did at that moment. Another human being was screaming to be heard and in desperation had turned to a cold stranger who was more interested in a novel than the real-life drama at her elbow.

All she needed was a listener...no advice, wisdom, experience, money, assistance, expertise or even compassion...but just a minute or two to listen.

It seemed rather incongruous that in a society of super-sophisticated communication, we often suffer from a shortage of listeners.

She talked numbly and steadily until we boarded the plane, then found her seat in another section. As I hung up my coat, I heard her plaintive voice say to her seat companion, “I’ll bet is cold in Chicago.”

I prayed, “Please God, let her listen.”

Why am I telling you this? To make me feel better. It won’t help, though (*If life Is a Bowl of Cherries – What Am I Doing in the Pits?*, by Erma Bombeck, pages 196-198).

1. Paul tells Timothy to be a good communicator, he needs to think about what he has heard. 2 Timothy 2:7
2. “REFLECT ON WHAT I AM SAYING.”
   1. Meditation is an important part of Bible study.
   2. It is necessary for the understanding the Lord wants to give.
      1. The man the Lord blesses is one who spends much time in thinking - meditation. Psalm 1:1,2
      2. Paul encouraged Timothy to plan for thinking time to put together his study and work. 1 Timothy 4:13,15
3. “THE LORD WILL GIVE YOU INSIGHT INTO ALL THIS.”
   1. How does the Lord give insight and understanding?
   2. Through listening. Matthew 13:15
   3. Why should I listen?
      1. The Lord commands it. Ecclesiastes 5:1,2; James 1:19
      2. To learn.
         1. When I talk, I only say something I already know.
         2. When I listen, I learn something someone else knows.
      3. To be able to carry on a profitable conversation and give good answers to the questions of others. Proverbs 18:13
         1. A man rushed into a drug store and asked a pharmacist for something to stop hiccups. The druggist poured a glass of water and threw it into the man’s face.

“Why did you do that?” the man exploded angrily.

“Well, you don’t have the hiccups now, do you?”

“No!” shouted the customer. “But my wife out in the car still has!” (*The All American Joke Book*, Bob Phillips, page 111).

* + - 1. I spent one hour going to J & J Industries, waiting to see Leo Harris with Menon and Minnie Ruth Wilkerson. When he asked about the kind of carpet they wanted, they said, “Shag.”

J & J doesn’t make shag.

I knew that an hour ago. One question could have saved four people an hour of time.

* 1. To whom or to what should I listen?
     1. God’s word. Ecclesiastes 5:1,2; Psalm 119:97,104
     2. To myself. Psalm 4:4
        1. For wisdom. James 1:5; Psalm 51:6
        2. To know how to work with and answer others.
           1. A good way to know how to relate to others and teach them is to listen to myself. Galatians 6:1
           2. The only way to apply the Golden Rule is to listen to myself. Matthew 7:12
        3. To gain the understanding mentioned in this verse.
           1. The word, *sunesis*, is “a running together, a flowing together; understanding” (*Thayer*, p.604).
           2. When I do this, I can learn and listen with my eyes as well as my ears. Proverbs 24:30-33
           3. I am able to build faith in God and His word that comes only by experience. Matthew 6:33; Psalm 37:25
     3. To others.
        1. I need to evaluate what I hear. Mark 4:24; 1 John 4:1
        2. I need to be careful how I hear. Luke 8:18
           1. With an open mind. Acts 17:11
           2. Evaluating with God’s standard.
        3. I need the help of others. Acts 8:30,31
     4. To all sides of an issue.
        1. Until I get different perspectives, I still need to listen. Proverbs 18:17
        2. Perspective is important.
           1. When a child spills something on a tablecloth, it’s carelessness. When a parent spills something, it’s an accident.
           2. A mother rebuked her daughter and put her to bed for being cross and ill-tempered throughout the day. After she had been neatly tucked in the little one, she commented, It’s temper when it’s me and nerves when it’s you” (*The All American Joke Book*, Bob Phillips, page 39).
           3. “Sometimes,” confided Mrs. Jones to her intimate friend, “I think my husband is the gentlest, most patient, best-natured soul that ever lived, and sometimes I think it’s just laziness (*That Reminds Me*, William F. Weihman, page 68).
           4. To a worm, digging in the hard ground is more relaxing than going fishing (*Reader’s Digest*, June 1981, page 105).
           5. Men call a 25-mile hike training in physical fitness. Women call it window shopping (*Sourcebook of Humor*, Hefley, page 175).
           6. A woman dropped her contact lens in a wastebasket, which was filled to the brim.

After she had searched diligently but in vain, her husband went through the trash and found the lens.

“How on earth did you do it?” she asked.

“Well,” he explained, “you were only searching for a tiny piece of plastic, but I was looking for $125.00 (*Reader’s Digest*, May, 1977, page 100).

* + - * 1. Girl: “Why don’t you sing a love song?”

Boy: “Hold that tiger; hold that tiger.”

Girl: “But Hold That Tiger is not a love song.

Boy: “It is to another tiger.”

* + - * 1. A man and his neighbor were in a dispute. He went to a lawyer and told what had happened and asked if he could win the case.

The lawyer said, “We can win that before any jury in the country. Do you want to pay me a retainer and get started?”

The farmer replied, “No. I just told you the other man’s side.”

* + - 1. One of the easiest mistakes to make in listening, is to listen to only one side of an issue and take that side without further investigation.

Conclusion:

1. The Lord wants to help us in communicating His word to others.
2. He tells us how to get understanding and wisdom. Proverbs 2:1-5
3. “But that’s hard!”
4. Rose Garden, Lynn Anderson.

I beg your pardon, I never promised you a rose garden.

Along with the sunshine, there’s gotta be a little rain sometimes.

When you take you’ve gotta give, so live and let live or let go

I beg your pardon, I never promised you a rose garden.

I could promise you things like big diamond rings,

But you don’t find roses growing on stalks of clover.

So you better think it over...

I could sing you a tune and promise you the moon,

But if that’s what it takes to hold you, I’d just as soon let you go.

But there’s one thing I want you to know:

You’d better look before you leap, still waters run deep

And there won’t always be someone there to pull you out

And you know what I’m talking about...

I beg your pardon, I never promised you a rose garden.

Along with the sunshine, there’s gotta be a little rain sometimes.

1. His thoughts were slow,

His words were few, and never seemed to glisten,

But he was a joy to all his friends -

You should have heard him listen (*Reader’s Digest*, May, 1984, p. 169).