



Quick to Listen Christina Fox

*Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear,
slow to speak, slow to anger. — James 1:19*

"Mom. Mom. Mom!"

"What?"

"Are you listening?" he asked.

My son touched my arm, and I looked up from my phone to find him standing there with exasperation spread across his face.

I wasn't listening.

We all know what it is like to talk with someone and realize they haven't heard a word we said. We can tell by their body language that their mind is elsewhere. We also know what it's like to share our thoughts with someone only to have them interrupt us with a story about themselves. "Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him" (Prov. 29:20).

Listening doesn't come naturally to sinners. We are self-centered by nature. We want the attention on us and what we have to say. We want to win arguments and have the last word. In conversation with others, we think of our own responses rather than seeking to understand the heart of another. Worse is when we don't listen to God's Word: "For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them" (Matt. 13:15).

But God is gracious! After James exhorts us to be slow to speak and quick to listen, he tells us God's word is "able to save your souls." "Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with weakness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). The Spirit opened our deaf ears to hear his Word. He implanted it in our hearts, enabling us to respond to the gospel. By faith in Christ, we are now new creations and therefore, new listeners.

We now have ears to hear.

What does it look like then to listen?

- **Listen to the Word:** Good listening starts with hearing God's Word. The more that it shapes our hearts, the more it then shapes how we listen.
- **Listen with humility:** Listening grows out of a humble heart that desires the best for others. That seeks to understand. That values what others have to say.
- **Listen with the whole self:** Show with your body language and eye contact that you are fully engaged in conversation.
- **Listen with your words:** Summarize what you heard another say to ensure that you did indeed hear them. "I heard you say _____, is that correct?"

Let's Chat:

- Have you ever felt truly heard? What made a difference in that conversation?
- What does it mean to you to know that Jesus hears your heart?
- What are common barriers to listening?
- How can the gospel shape your conversations?

Take-away Truth

Jesus gave us new ears to hear; let us use them!

Find more conversation starters: <https://women.pcacdm.org/made-for-more>

