

# Perspectives

## Listen!

Picture this: You are having dinner with a friend in a crowded restaurant. You're discussing financial investments and your friend tells you what his/her broker suggests. You respond by telling your friend what your broker—uttering a specific company name—says, and suddenly the whole restaurant becomes quiet, with everyone leaning in to hear as you share your broker's advice. Sound familiar? This is a famous scenario from a 1970s commercial. These ads were intended to lead you to believe that when his/her investment broker spoke, people listened.

Today, many things compete for our listening ear. It is estimated that the average person per day sees 5,000 ads, sends or receives 94 texts, and spends six hours online. The messages we hear from politicians, news organizations, consumer products, friends, family, and so on can become overwhelming. It is often easy to seemingly listen to everyone and at the same time, really listen to no one. Someone has compared our attempts to hear and process all the messages we receive every minute of every day to that of drinking from a firehose. The fact is we live in an age when listening—really listening—involves intentionality. That is, purposefully taking time to hear and understand.

One thing I enjoy is sitting down with my wife after we get home from work and hearing about her day—both the highs and the lows. As I listen, I focus my attention on her, letting her know that she is important, and therefore what she has to say is important. When she is talking, I do not think about sports, television, or my “to do” list; I center on her. Really listening to my wife involves my undivided attention.

This quarter, we are focusing on the Messiah from the book of Matthew. We will look at who Jesus is, what He did, and what He came to teach us. As we encounter each story, it is important that we do not just hear the stories, but really listen. This means going beyond just reading and/or hearing the words, but seeking to understand, meditating on, and obeying its message.

Each week, as you enter the room of your small group, may your prayer echo the words of Samuel, “Speak, for your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3:10).

May God bless you as you study His Word this quarter!

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