

Listen to me!

by Christine Wentzel

One of my first ever devotions written for AW4W spoke about improving our personal ministry by paying attention to what our talents are, what we are particularly good at. Have you been finding yours?



While standing in line at the checkout lane and listening to a lady complain about her life, it occurred to me one of my God-given gifts is being a good listener. I will admit at times (like this one) I felt this was a curse that needed exorcising, but that is my old Eve rearing her selfish head.

Why was this woman complaining to me, a perfect stranger? Probably because she, like all of us, just wants to be heard. I know what it's like when someone's tuned out on me. I want to cross my arms over my chest, stomp my foot down and yell, "Listen to me!" Well...okay, I've done that, but it yields nothing but an "I-am-listening-to-you" shouted right back at me, then I shout back and before you know it my original point gets vaporized in the vitriol.

That's why God told James to pass on this heavenly tip: *My dear [sisters], take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak...* James 1:19

And that's the key to the gift of listening-it's so simple. I believe we all possess this treasure even those who physically cannot hear. For listening is not only hearing, but it's "listening" to body language as well. You know when there are tears in someone's eyes that they are feeling strong emotion. Perhaps their shoulders are slumped-are they carrying a sorrowful burden?

During this busy holiday season you will feel more rushed, or you may even feel lost in the shuffle and less heard. Therefore, this is the perfect time to practice presenting your gift of listening to others. Slow yourself down...take a deep breath...look into their eyes and show them compassion. Assure them to...*not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* Philippians 4:6-7

If you're feeling tuned out...slow yourself down...take a deep breath...show them compassion and unwrap the holy Gift given to you...*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* Isaiah 9:6



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Scripture References: Numbers 22:27; Proverbs 10:19; Proverbs 14:29; Proverbs 16:32;
Proverbs 17:27; Proverbs 29:20; Ecclesiastes 7:9; Acts 1:15; James 1:2, 16

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