

"God Help Me to be a Better Listener"

"Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath..." (Jas. 1:19).

By Jonathan Perz

I have recently learned three powerful lessons about listening that I hope you might find beneficial in some way...

1) There is a difference between discernment and passing judgment when it comes to hearing things you disagree with.

By all means discern, but exercise wisdom in passing judgment on every word you disagree with. It can and will be construed as not listening, particularly when one is wrestling with the issue at hand. Sometimes, someone just needs to express their thoughts, sound out their reasoning and give voice to their confusion to find clarity and conviction. Yet, judging and expressing disagreement with their every word will create a stifling and oppressive environment to such healthy and natural growth.

2) Your silence does not imply your approval.

Fear of being thought of as approving often compels us to express disapproval. Yet, validation (a critical part of listening) often fails where constant disapproval reigns. To understand and validate why

someone feels the way they do does not equate to approving and encouraging them in their misunderstanding. Yet, before we can understand and validate, we must learn to listen with empathetic ears instead of judgmental ears. The wise man said, "He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit..." (Prov. 17:26).

3) Opening hearts and building trust are nigh unto impossible in the face of constant re-buff.

When every point is attacked and countered with an opposing view, a spirit of defensiveness and an entrenching of thought (even wrong thinking) set in. Instead of being open to examining our views, we become more concerned with defending our own thinking at all costs. It is hard to be objective in the face of perceived attack. Fight or flight naturally kicks in and fruitful discussion of disagreement departs.

By no means have I got this listening thing down, but I have gained a little more insight on what it is to be "swift to hear...". God help me to be a better listener.



Lisa Carter (Luke's mother)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Virginia Box (Sarah Norman's grandmother)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Jamin Hymel (Chad's son)
Buddy Scalf (Ada's uncle)	Artina Hunt (Esther's friend's sister)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Ricky Tucker (Tyler's cousin)	Ermogene Laxson (Sara Lail's grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Bernice Martin (Will Harris' great-grandmother)	Sasha Rozier (Makenzie Reynolds' cousin)	Eva Jean Cavender (Matt's grandmother)
Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's Granddad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Maria Aragon (Liseth's Mother)

August Birthdays

- 2-Emma Miller
- 6-Allyson Houlton
- 8-Alli Luther
- 9-Elliot Weldon
- 9-Troy Swenson
- 10-David Hartsell
- 11-Walker Davis
- 12-Jon Coleman
- 13-Brendon Kirby
- 13-Ariel Ramsey
- 13-Amanda Bertoldi
- 15-Kalee Reid
- 16-Cade Smith
- 18-Makayla Chittam
- 19-Brettlyn Currier
- 19-Taylor Lawrence
- 21-Matt Cavender
- 23-Jordan Flatt
- 23-Colton Miller
- 24-Sophie Hall
- 27-Chip Freeman
- 28-Larry Rouse
- 28-Cole Johnson
- 28-Alex Dobbins

News and Notes

- ☒ - The ladies' class this week is Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at Joanneta Lauderdale's house.. We will be studying Timothy.
- ☒ - Jacob Smith got a good report on his lymphoma and will begin a round of radiation this week.
- ☒ - Be sure to have your picture taken (or updated) for the directory in the foyer on Sunday mornings.
- ☒ - The meal list for Steve Klein is on the bulletin board.
- ☒ - Congratulations to our new graduates!
- ☒ - Orié Cecil - Masters, Elizabeth Barham, Kelsey Gallahar.
- ☒ - Connor Godwin had surgery on Thursday for a torn ACL.
- ☒ - We rejoice in the baptism of Humberto on Thursday p.m.!
- ☒ - Please keep those in your prayers who are in the adoption process: Kevin and Jessica Anderson, Craig and Paula Davis
- ☒ - Let us be preparing for our upcoming meeting with Steve Klein, August 21-25!
- ☒ - All audio is immediately posted to www.aubeacon.com

The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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Does the Bible Encourage Bigotry?

By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.



Thoughts to Ponder

Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. (Acts 10:34)

In the current furor over "gay rights," there seems to be a concerted effort to brand anyone opposed to homosexual behavior as bigots still living in the Dark Ages. We are constantly bombarded with calls to wipe out bigotry and to be more tolerant of people different from us, regardless of the source or nature of that difference.

It is becoming ever more politically expedient to cater to the "gay rights" cause. Our new president-elect promises swift action to overturn the ban on homosexuals in the military. This will force all military personnel to consider all the gays to be just one of the guys. To do otherwise will be to condone bigotry.

Efforts are also underway to ban discrimination against homosexuals in housing, jobs, and other areas. The goal is to force the American public to grant to "gays" all the rights and protection that are rightfully granted to racial and ethnic minorities. The propaganda mills and the liberal news media are working overtime to depict the opposition to this movement

Does God love the "gay" person? Of course, He does. He also loves the drunkard, the thief, the murderer and the heterosexual fornicator. Jesus died for them and all other sinners. If they will meet the Lord's conditions of salvation they can be washed from their sins in the blood of Christ.

as bigotry. Our educational system, in many instances, is conditioning our children to accept anyone regardless of his "race, color, or "sexual preference."

Religious groups are being pressured to get in step with modern society by accepting "gays," not only as members, but into their leadership. Any group who makes any kind of gesture in that direction is generally, and often generously, praised by the news media for being enlightened and progressive. Such efforts are considered as just

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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another step away from the bigotry of the past.

All of this has caused me to ask, sometimes out loud, "Does the Bible condone bigotry? Were some of those we read about in the Bible bigots? Is God a bigot?" The answer is "yes" -- if opposition to "gays" and their perverse lifestyle makes one a bigot.

God destroyed Sodom, a city with the dubious distinction of having a sin named for it. The nature of her prevailing sin is learned from reading **Genesis 19**. On the eve of her destruction, two angels in the form of men were guests in the home of Lot, Abraham's nephew. That night, the Bible says, "The men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, 'Where are the men who came to you to-night? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally'" (**vv. 4-5**). To protect his guests, Lot offered the men what he considered a lesser evil -- his two virgin daughters. This did not appease this "gay" mob. In **verse 9**, they just told Lot to "stand back!" and accused him of keeping on acting as a judge (**v. 9**). I guess they thought he was some kind of bigot. But God made good his threat to destroy the city. It went up in smoke. Was God a bigot?

In giving the law of Moses, God included a ban on homosexual conduct. He said, "If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them" (**Lev. 20:13**). Was God a bigot in commanding such? Was Moses a bigot for passing it on to Israel?

Paul wrote, "For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing

what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. . . . Who, knowing the righteous judgments of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them" (**Rom. 1:26,27,32**).

Again he wrote, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (**1 Cor. 6:9**).

Was Paul a bigot? Paul said, "These things we (Paul and other inspired men -- eob) also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches" (1 Cor. 2:12,13). He also said that the things that he wrote were the commandments of the Lord (**1 Cor. 14:37**).

Are the biblical writers, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit to be charged with bigotry? Certainly not! Neither should anyone who follows their teaching on the moral issue of homosexuality.

Does God love the "gay" person? Of course, He does. He also loves the drunkard, the thief, the murderer and the heterosexual fornicator. Jesus died for them and all other sinners. If they will meet the Lord's conditions of salvation they can be washed from their sins in the blood of Christ. When they do this, their guilt is removed. They are no longer unrighteous, but made righteous by the mercy of God. They are washed, sanctified and justified "in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (**1 Cor. 6:9-11**). One of the conditions for all of this is repentance. God does not accept them "just as they are" without any change of heart and behavior. Until people turn from their ungodly conduct, they have no right to expect the same "rights" as those who do not practice such sins against God and society.

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If You Are Planning to Preach

By Bill Hall

If you are planning to preach, give careful attention to the following three basic elements of successful preaching.

Spirituality. The faithful preacher has a deep devotion to God and His word. He prays often. He lives with a constant awareness of God's nearness; he "walks with God." His character is beyond reproach. He hates sin and error, but loves truth and righteousness. "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." If you want to preach, but lack these qualities, then wait. Develop these first. You can hardly motivate others to become what you have not become yourself.

Preparation. Learn to read. Reading comprehension is an essential tool to understanding the scriptures and related books. Learn to think. Many of the things you will read in commentaries and even in brotherhood periodicals will be false. Woe is that man who in his preaching and Bible class teaching merely parrots what he has read. Learn to differentiate: between truth and error, between fact and supposition, between what is clearly taught and what is in the "gray" area, between what is congregationally applicable and what is individually applicable, between the time to "rock the boat" and the time not to "rock the boat." "Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (**Matthew 10:16**).

Learn courage. You will be faced with pressures and intimidation from every side. To some, you will preach too hard; to some, too

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soft. Some will pressure you to compromise; others will try to force you into some "hard line" position which you really can't find in the scriptures. Please God. Get along with the brethren as far as possible, but not at the risk of losing your soul. If problems do develop, take a long, hard look at "self." We fear that many a man has created a

"doctrinal" crisis in an effort to cover up his own bad disposition and dictatorial attitude.

3. Presentation. You are no longer a school boy playing a part on a stage. Neither are you a comedian being paid to entertain an audience. You are a dying man preaching to dying men and women the only message on earth that can save their souls. Speak to them. Help them to see their sins, and point them to the Savior. Speak with the warmth, and love, and sincerity that will let them know that you care for them and their eternal destiny. What you speak may be more important, but how you speak is important, too.

L. A. Mott, Jr. (Notebook on Jeremiah, p. 67) writes: "Someone has said that there are three kinds of preachers. The first has to say something—he is a paid talker who has to fill a certain amount of time each week. The second has something to say, and that is a whole lot better. But best of all is the third—the man who has something to say and has to say it. That is the kind of preacher Jeremiah was." And that's the kind of preacher you must be.

