



BE A GOOD LISTENER

The teacher or preacher has a responsibility to teach or preach the gospel and nothing but the gospel. And the listener has a responsibility to make sure what is heard is in keeping with what the Bible says. Each responsibility provides a check to make sure that what is said and what is heard is in keeping with the Word. When either of the checks is missing the door is left open for error being taught and/or caught.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HEARERS

Now these [Bereans] were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

Acts 17:11

But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good.

1Thessalonians 5:21

Here is a list of “red flag” words. Words that should sound the alarm to warn the listener that what follows is not based on Scripture but is based on personal beliefs, supposition, reason, or perception. Such statements and conclusions come from the mind of the speaker and not from the pages of the Bible.

I believe... Don't you suppose... It sounds reasonable... Probably... Most likely... Don't you think... The way I see it... It doesn't say that, but... Surely it must be... and others you may think of.

It is imperative that the listener develop a keen sense of hearing to make sure what is being taught actually is contained in the Bible. Whether the Bible is being taught in a class, a sermon, a gospel paper, or wherever. It will take practice, but the results can be most beneficial. It's a good defense against any teaching, idea, or opinion being received as having a biblical basis.

ADMNITION

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

2 Peter 3:17-18

Undesirable Side Effects

A pharmaceutical company made a major breakthrough. They produced a pill that would prevent the common cold. Elated, many began taking the pills. But they soon found out there were some undesirable side-effects – nothing life threatening or severe – just undesirable. Fearing rejection of the new medicine, the pill was reformulated to remove the undesirable side effects. Well, the rest is history. Millions began taking the pills. Everyone was basking in the blissfulness of such wonderful medicine.

Then it happened! One person who was taking the medicine faithfully came down with a cold. Was this a fluke? Then others who took the pills came down with colds. It soon became evident that the pills were not effective in preventing colds after all. What happened? In checking the ingredients of the pills, it was discovered that when the product was reformulated to remove the undesirable side-effects, they also removed its effectiveness in preventing colds. [This story is fictitious, but it illustrates a vital point.]

A Parallel Scenario

Jesus Christ made a major breakthrough. By His sacrificial death, He was able to offer salvation to all mankind. He presented His prescription for salvation to mankind through His Word. Elated, many decided to accept His offering. But they found there were some undesirable side-effects (such as obligations, commands to keep, things to be believed, etc.).

Fearing rejection, some of those dispensing the good news reformulated it so as to remove the undesirable side-effects. Well, the rest is history. Many joined the ranks of those who liked the more palatable “prescription.”

On the day of judgment they eagerly

awaited to hear the words, “enter in.” One person who had joined the ranks came face-to-face with the Lord, and the Lord did not know him. Was this a fluke? Then another, and another, who had joined the ranks also were unknown to the Lord. They were rejected forthright. It became apparent that the reformulated prescription had lost its effectiveness (i.e., it was powerless to save).

What happened? In checking the ingredients of the belief they held, it was discovered that when the Gospel was reformulated to remove the undesirable side-effects, its ability to save souls was also removed. (Do you think this couldn't happen? Read on!)



“Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”
Matthew 7:22-27

A Lesson to Be Learned

The Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth has the power to save.

“Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.”
John 17:17

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

The Apostle Paul: An Example for All Preachers

**stand behind the cross
not in front of it**

**what's important is the message
not the messenger**

**what is said is to come from the Bible
not just from the mind of the speaker**

**speak where the Bible speaks and be
silent where the Bible is silent.**

**The wisdom of men is not a
sure foundation for faith.**

"You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 4:2

"Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it.

Deuteronomy 12:32

Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.

Proverbs 30:5-6

BEEN THERE –

DONE THAT

**Learning from the Successes
and Mistakes of Others**

Unwilling to Embrace the Truth

John chapter 9 contains the account of Jesus healing a blind man. The fact that he was blind was established by the testimony of his parents. The fact that he could see could not be denied. Yet, the fact that Jesus healed him was rejected. Not for a lack of evidence, but for a lack of willingness to embrace the truth.

The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him. Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" So they put him out.

John 9:30-34

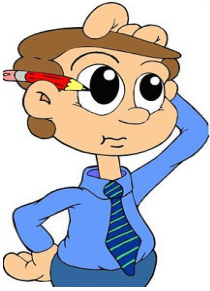
Today there are some who say "I know the Bible says that, but... (then give the reason or excuse for not accepting the Truth)." Finding a Bible truth unacceptable because it conflicts with one's personal beliefs is a tragedy. One needs to change his or her personal belief, not reject Bible truths.

LESSON

Arguing against facts will not change them.

Denying facts will not make them false.

Rejecting facts won't make them disappear.



Ponder This

The Best Memory System

Forget each kindness that you do
as soon as you have done it;
Forget the praise that falls to you
the moment you have won it;
Forget the slander that you hear
before you repeat it;

Forget each slight, each spite, each sneer
wherever you may meet it.

Remember every kindness done to you,
whate'er its measure;
Remember the praise by other's won,
and pass it on with pleasure;
Remember every promise made
and keep it to the letter;
Remember those who lend you aid
and be a grateful debtor;

Remember all the happiness that comes
your way in living;
Forget each worry and distress,
be hopeful and forgiving;
Remember good, remember truth,
remember heaven's above you,
And you'll find, through age and youth
that many hearts will love you.

—Anonymous

*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor
and slander be put away from you, along with all
malice. And be kind to one another, tender-
hearted, forgiving each other, just as God
in Christ also has forgiven you.*

Ephesians 4:31-32



Pearls from Proverbs

SPEECH Foolish Talk

- 14:3 *In the mouth of the foolish is a rod for his back, but the lips of the wise will preserve them.*
- 15:2 *The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, but the mouth of fools spouts folly.*
- 18:6-7 *A fool's lips bring strife, and his mouth calls for blows. A fool's mouth is his ruin, and his lips are the snare of his soul.*
- 19:1 *Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than he who is perverse in speech and is a fool.*

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### Miscellaneous Musings

A fool may have a knowing look – until he opens his mouth.

Wise men think without talking. A fool reverses the order.

To have an open mind doesn't mean you must have an open mouth.

*Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; When he closes his lips, he is considered prudent.*

Proverbs 17:28

F.Y.C. is a monthly publication by Ron Adams.  
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